"And now, Yvonne, to set your mind at rest, gaze into the pool at your feet."
Frontispiece.—See Page 168.

THE GREEN FOREST FAIRY BOOK

THE GREEN FOREST FAIRY BOOK

BY
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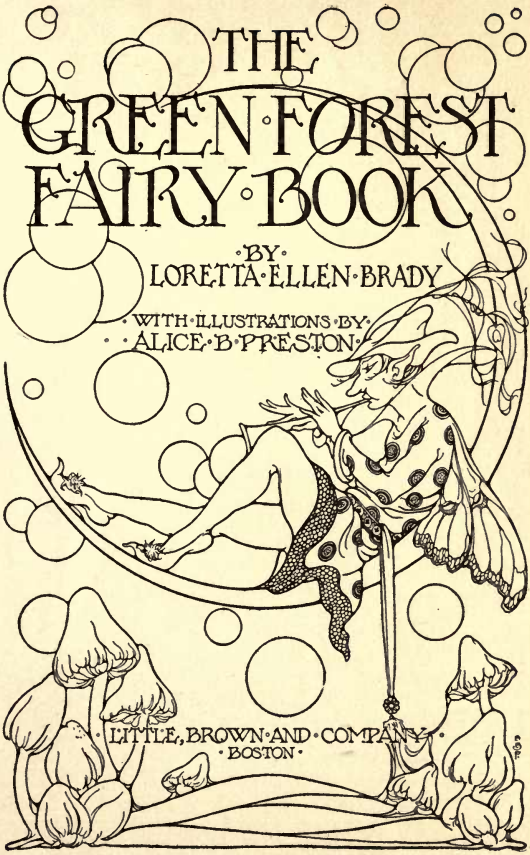

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TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS
OF LITTLE JIM WARDS
SAN FRANCISCO CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF
OUR TWILIGHT STORY-HOURS
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

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THE GREEN FOREST FAIRY BOOK

PROLOGUE

LONG, long ago, when all the world was young and there were but few people dwelling on it, the strangest things could often come to pass. Then fairyfolk still lived in the greenwoods and elves sang and danced in the soft summer dawns. Then trees could sing and flowers speak and birds would carry messages about the world; wild beasts were often loyal friends to men and helped them in their difficulties. In these old days, most noble dukes and earls would fall in love with dairymaids whose gentle ways and manners charmed their hearts. Sometimes great kings grew weary of the splendor of their courts and left their thrones to live as simple peasants. Each princess had

a fairy godmother who showered her with magic gifts. Then wise men read the stars and seers would gaze in crystal bowls to tell the coming good or ill they saw.

In those old days, the housewives left a bit of bread and cheese upon the pantry shelf each evening, that the brownie who was said to dwell in every kitchen might have a midnight feast. These brownies, 't was said also, would make much mischief if they were not treated very well. In early dawns, when fields of flowers were asparkle in the sun, the milkmaids used to bathe their eyes and ears with dew that they might see the fairyfolk forever afterward and hear them sing at midnight in the glen. The farmers' boys would search among the hedges in hopes of meeting The Red Caps who were said to bring much luck. These Red Caps too were said to give a magic purse of gold to those they fancied, — a purse that was always brimful no matter what was spent from it. The witches still rode broomsticks through the skies and there were wishing wells and magic charms and spells.

In those delightful days of which I tell, there

were not scores and scores of books as there are now. Travelers journeying about the world told tales of the wonders that they saw and heard. It was not then thought strange that kings and queens or royal counselors and such wise folk should love to hear these wonder tales. In those dear days, indeed, the grown folk all loved wonder tales as well as children love them now and were not worse because of it. Sometimes these wonder tales were told by magic chairs or chests; sometimes by birds or beasts that were enchanted and had power of speech.

It has been related that in those olden days there was a lovely bird with plumage all of the purest gold and it was called The Golden Bird. The Golden Bird had a voice so rare and sweet that when it sang the nightingales stopped midway in their songs to listen. The Golden Bird likewise possessed the gift of speech and could tell wonder tales the like of which were never heard before or since. When it began to sing in any land, news that The Golden Bird had come spread swiftly everywhere. The king would then declare a holi-

day which lasted all the time The Golden Bird was in the land. The people hastened to the greenwood and there beneath the trees would listen while The Golden Bird told wonder tales and sang for their delight. And thus, The Golden Bird flew all about the world, to every land and clime, beloved by all folk everywhere.

But sad to tell, at last there came a time when The Golden Bird was seen no more. The folk of every land looked anxiously for its return and thought it stayed too long in other places. But years passed by and still The Golden Bird came not. Then travelers journeying about the world declared The Golden Bird was nowhere to be found and all the people mourned at these sad tidings. Some thought the lovely bird had perished at some greedy hunter's hand; others said the world had grown too wicked for The Golden Bird to dwell here any longer. However, what had happened to the lovely creature, no one ever knew.

But sadder still to tell is this: When The Golden Bird was seen to fly about the earth no more, the people did not hold its memory dear. As time passed on and it came not, they

thought about it less and less and very few recalled the wonder tales The Golden Bird had told. Then as the world grew older and all folk began to doubt about the fairies and to scoff at wishing wells, The Golden Bird was quite forgot by all save one. This one, a little girl who tended flocks upon a mountain, gazed in the clouds at dawn each day in hopes to see The Golden Bird come soaring. Sometimes she wept because The Golden Bird came not. At last, to please the child, her aged grandame, who had heard The Golden Bird tell wonder tales when she had been a child, took pen and ink and wrote them down as she remembered them. She wrote, 't is said, a hundred tales or more but through the ages that have passed between they have been lost, until there are but eleven; these are the eleven that I have set down in The Green Forest Fairy Book.

CHAPTER I

DAME GRUMBLE AND HER CURIOUS APPLE TREE

I

Long, long ago, in a country quite close to the top of the earth, where the North Wind blew fiercely each spring, there lived a woman called Dame Grumble. Now Dame Grumble had an Apple Tree which she loved exceedingly, although it vexed her beyond all compare. It was a very fine large tree, and well shaped for shade, just the sort of tree that should have yielded a bushel or two of fruit each autumn; but it did not. Each year when the cuckoo flew over the earth, calling the trees and flowers to waken because spring was come again, the Apple Tree would be covered with clouds upon clouds of fragrant, pinky-white blossoms. Then Dame Grumble's heart would rejoice. But no sooner was the Apple Tree thus bedecked than the North Wind would blow furiously,

tearing off the blossoms and carrying them off in clouds. The curious part of it all was this: When a few of the blossoms chanced to fall to the ground, they made a chinking sound like that of small coins in children's banks. Then when these blossoms had withered, Dame Grumble would find nice, new shining pennies where they had lain. From this she supposed the Apple Tree would one day bear apples of gold.

Now Dame Grumble, it must be confessed, was not very amiable. Indeed, it was from her nature that she drew her name. Some said Dame Grumble complained from the time she rose in the morning until she sought her bed at night. Even then she complained of her hard pillow or thin coverlets until she fell asleep. Her poor son, Freyo, thought his mother must surely grumble all night in her dreams, for on waking each day she began directly where she had left off the night before. Many a time this poor lad wished that he were not lame, but could go out in the world to seek his way for himself. Dame Grumble led him a dreadful life.

If the day were hot, Dame Grumble thought longingly of the days when the snow lay on the ground and she sat in comfort before the blazing logs. But when the winter came again, she complained bitterly because she had to break the ice on the well each morning. She declared it was a shame, since she had but one son, that he should be lame, and thus be a burden instead of a staff. Her ceaseless scolding and carping often made poor Freyo so miserable that he would put aside his wood carving, for he had no heart to work. If the East Wind blew ever so lightly, Dame Grumble complained that it gave her strange pains in her face, and would wish instead for the West Wind, which she thought mild and gentle. But when the West Wind blew over the forest and fields and dried the linen she spread on the hedges, Dame Grumble cried out that he was a thieving creature. She would hasten to gather her dried linens, vowing all the while that the West Wind would steal them if he dared. Oh, there was no pleasing Dame Grumble! Freyo, her son, was well aware of that.

Now seeing that Dame Grumble was of a dis-

"Oh, you wicked creature!" Dame Grumble would exclaim when he began to shake the Apple Tree.— *Page* 9.

position to grumble and complain when there was no cause at all, you may have some idea of her bitter feeling when the North Wind robbed her of her apple blossoms each spring.

"Oh, you wicked creature!" Dame Grumble would exclaim when he began to shake the Apple Tree. "Just wait, and some day I will catch you and shut you up in some dark place where you shall remain forever. No one would miss you. The North Wind is the most hated wind that blows!"

"Indeed, Dame Grumble!" the North Wind would reply. "How would the boys and girls ever skate if I did not blow in winter time? How would the forest and orchards ever have time to make their new green leaves and flowers for the springtime, if I did not lock the earth tight each winter? You make a mistake, Madam. The North Wind would be keenly mourned and missed. But beware! Some day I will catch you and carry you off to a certain desert island in the middle of the sea, and there you may complain for all your days."

Then the North Wind would roar and blow his hardest, and Dame Grumble's petticoats

would spread out like sails, until she feared she might be blown away, and would seek refuge in the cottage. There in anger she would watch the clouds of blossoms blown from her favorite tree. When the North Wind had gone off again, she would rush out and scold the Apple Tree severely.

"Oh! Such a tree!" Dame Grumble would exclaim in vexation. "If you would but cling more firmly to your blossoms, at least a few would remain on your branches, and then I should have a golden harvest. From the pennies I find where your blossoms have withered, I am quite sure that you would bear apples of gold, if you bore apples at all. Then I could sell these golden apples and make a fortune for myself."

"But, Dame Grumble," the Apple Tree would protest, "you cannot withstand the North Wind, either. Your petticoats spread out like sails, and you can scarcely keep your feet on the ground."

"And what of that?" Dame Grumble would answer crossly. "I have but two feet, while you have roots as numerous as your branches.

Moreover, they reach far down beneath the earth, and there spread far and wide as your topmost boughs. You are stronger than I. You should fight the North Wind, who is naught but a wicked robber in disguise. I am sure that he has stored up a fortune in pennies from my blossoms that he has stolen this many a long year." Then Dame Grumble would shake the Apple Tree until Freyo would beg her to stop.

It must not be supposed that Dame Grumble did not contrive various ways to save her blossoms from her enemy. Indeed, she spent many hours every day thinking of plans to defeat the North Wind, but she had never succeeded. All one winter she worked in the cold and snow, chopping tall thorn branches to make a barrier about the Apple Tree. "Thorn branches are very strong, and will protect the Apple Tree," thought she. Freyo told his mother this was useless work, but she would pay no heed to what he said.

"Then, Mother," pleaded the poor lad, "since you will not stay indoors this bitter weather, please bring me a branch of walnut from the

forest. I would like to carve a clock-case in a certain design I have in mind. If I had but proper tools for wood carving and a store of oak and walnut, I might one day make a fortune for you. Then you would have no longer need to quarrel with the North Wind about the blossoms."

"Oh, hold your silly tongue!" cried Dame Grumble. "A great simpleton I would be to sit here quietly and wait for you to make a fortune with your bits of woods! Each year the North Wind steals a fortune in pennies from me, and I mean to try to stop him if I can. Should I find a bit of walnut that will fit into my pocket, you may have it; otherwise you must do without."

Poor Freyo had but few tools, and those few were very poor; nevertheless, he had skillful fingers and could carve lovely pictures in wood. Dame Grumble always laughed scornfully when the lad spoke of the fortune he hoped one day to make. To her mind, wood carving and clumsy chests and clock-cases were naught but folly. She rarely remembered to bring Freyo a branch of wood from the forest. Dame Grum-

ble was always thinking of her blossoms and her enemy, the North Wind, and had no time to think of Freyo. So the poor lad had to content himself with bits of wood he found in the chimney corner, and he carved frames and treasure boxes from these.

Now, as we have told, all one winter Dame Grumble worked diligently dragging thorn branches from the forest, until she had a great heap. When the snow began to melt, she planted these branches of thorn about her favorite tree. Then when the Apple Tree was decked once more in clouds upon clouds of fragrant, pinky-white blossoms, the North Wind came roaring over the fields and lanes. He laughed loudly when he saw the barrier of thorn branches.

"And so, Dame Grumble," cried the North Wind, "you do not know my strength better than this!" Seizing a branch of the thorn, he tore it from the ground as though it had been a twig and hurled it in the air. Then he did likewise to the rest, and in half an hour he had torn up every vestige of Dame Grumble's barrier.

"Many times I have left you a few blossoms, Dame Grumble," he cried, as he blew on his way, "but you have never thanked me for the pennies, so this time you shall have none."

Naturally Dame Grumble was more vexed than ever before. She shook the Apple Tree with fury and left off only when she was too weary to shake it longer. All evening she scolded so bitterly that Freyo wished himself far away. Life with this scolding dame was far from pleasant for the poor lame lad. Still he never complained. "Mother complains enough for both," thought he.

When Dame Grumble arose next morning, she had another plan in mind. "My son," said she, "I am going on a journey to seek in all places for the fortune in pennies which my wicked enemy, the North Wind, has stolen from me. When I have found it, I shall return, and all things will be well. I shall buy you a fine coach and build a noble house where we shall live like kings and queens, and there we shall be very happy, I daresay."

"But, Mother!" cried Freyo in dismay, "the North Wind travels all over the earth, and that

you cannot do. When winter comes what will you do for shelter? Besides, I do not long for a coach, but for a crutch instead; and as for happiness — it is to be found in kind hearts rather than in noble houses. In our little cottage we could be as happy as kings and queens, if you would but leave off scolding and be content."

"That shows how little you know!" replied Dame Grumble. "I cannot be content without a fortune, and a fortune I mean to have. If I have not found the hollow that I seek before winter comes again, I shall return. But I have a feeling that my search will not be all in vain." Then, bidding Freyo take good care of the cottage, Dame Grumble tied on her bonnet and shawl and set out on her journey.

When Dame Grumble had gone, Freyo was greatly puzzled. He was not sure that he was really lonely. He missed his mother's presence about the cottage because she was a famous housewife, always busy with some savory broth, or baking great loaves of brown bread. However, he was relieved that he did not hear her sharp tongue scolding all day long. He care-

fully tidied the kitchen until it looked spotless and shining, as though Dame Grumble herself had done it. Then he sat down before his bench. While he was working, Freyo paused; he thought he heard his name called softly.

"Freyo, Freyo!" spoke a gentle voice. "Only come to the door, and you can see me. I have something to tell you that will make you happy. Please do come!" Freyo set down his work and hobbled to the door.

"It is I, the Apple Tree," spoke the voice again; "come nearer that I may talk to you. You have always been kind to me, when Dame Grumble has abused me, Freyo, and now I shall reward you."

Freyo made his way to the Apple Tree, and she continued: "Do you see my two stoutest branches quite close to the ground? These I mean to give you for crutches."

"Oh, Apple Tree!" cried Freyo. "I would not cut off your branches! I would not give you such pain."

"But cutting off these two branches of mine will cause me no great pain," the Apple Tree insisted. "They are over-heavy, and next

spring when the North Wind blows, I fear that he will snap them off. What the North Wind cannot bend he will break, as well you know. When you have made your crutches, you may go to the forest and gather more wood for your work of wood carving, until you have the store that you desire."

At last Freyo was persuaded. The branches were cut, and all day long he sat beneath the Apple Tree, while he fashioned a pair of crutches. By evening they were finished, and when he slept that night, Freyo dreamed of wandering in the greenwood; he had never yet been so far from the cottage door.

"How well you have done!" exclaimed the Apple Tree next morning, when Freyo stepped out briskly on his crutches.

"And you too have done well," replied the lad. "I see two tufts of green leaves already at work to cover the places where I cut your branches." He waved farewell to the Apple Tree and set upon his way. Freyo was gone the whole day long. When the sun set that evening, he had not returned, and even when the moon rose slowly, still he did not come.

The Apple Tree began to worry and to fret lest her branches had not proved strong enough for crutches. Then presently she saw Freyo with a heavy pannier strapped upon his back; but not one bit of oak or walnut wood had he.

"Ah, Apple Tree!" cried he, "never in my life have I been happy as I was to-day. Only to wander beneath the trees and see the blue forget-me-nots that make a lovely carpet underfoot, or to hear the birds sing sweetly was like paradise. I wished the whole world were one great forest, and that the time were always spring. I could not bear to come away!"

"But Freyo," said the Apple Tree, "you have brought nothing for your work! How will you make chests and clock-cases?"

"I could not find it in my heart to cut the smallest twig," confessed the lad. "The trees looked all so beautiful and stately that it seemed to me a shame. Instead I gathered brown bells and forget-me-nots to plant about your roots. I am sure you must be lonely in this bare wind-swept spot, and they will serve for company."

"Now that was kind," replied the Apple Tree, "but you must now give heed to what I say.

In the forest there are many trees that will gladly give you a fine branch or two. When next you go there, tell them that you are the friend of the Apple Tree whose blossoms fall to earth with a chinking sound, like small coins in children's banks. Then they will know you and will be generous as I have been. Besides, I warn you that at the first approach of winter, Dame Grumble will return. She will be crosser than ever, for she will never find the fortune in pennies that she seeks. Now be advised, Freyo, and gather a goodly store of oak and walnut while you may."

When Freyo went again to the forest, he told the message of the Apple Tree to the tall pines and low bending oaks, and to shady maples too. These trees all gave him such a bounteous supply of boughs and branches that Freyo soon had store to last him for his carving a whole year or more.

'T was well he had. One day as he sat working beneath the Apple Tree, he noticed that the leaves fell fast and that the wind blew chill. Another morning, when the maples on the hillsides flamed like fire, Freyo heard a shrill familiar

voice borne on the air, and presently Dame Grumble herself appeared before the cottage door.

Now, as the Apple Tree had foretold, Dame Grumble was crosser than ever. She had not found the fortune in pennies she had sought, and she was out of humor with her journey. She vowed she had not had one pleasant moment from the time she had set out; she said that she had longed unceasingly for her little cottage. Dame Grumble solemnly declared that she had done with journeys forevermore and looked forward to great happiness, now that she was home at last. She praised Freyo's housekeeping and said the cottage looked as tidy as a pin. When she had laid aside her bonnet and shawl, she began to make a fine supper for him.

"How nice that you have crutches, my son, and can get about so well!" she cried with pleasure.

"Are they not a blessing, Mother?" asked Freyo. "They are not bad for a poor lad who never before had seen a crutch, but made them just as best he knew."

Dame Grumble continued to praise the crutches and to admire them until she learned that they were made from branches of the Apple Tree. Then she was furious; her anger knew no bounds. She rushed out to the Apple Tree and shook it with all her might. Then she ran in to throw the crutches in the fire, but this Freyo would not permit.

"The Apple Tree herself gave me her branches, Mother," said he, "and the crutches are mine."

"Give them to me at once, I say!" stormed Dame Grumble. "The Apple Tree is mine, and consequently her branches are mine also. I must punish you for this disobedience. Do you not know that I prize the Apple Tree above all else on earth? Do I not expect a harvest of golden apples from it some day? Now when that day is come, I shall not have nearly so many, because of your wickedness. Why did you cut as much as a twig from the Apple Tree?"

"Mother," answered Freyo, "if there be any harm done, it is done. To burn the crutches will not make the branches grow upon the Apple Tree again." Dame Grumble first commanded and then entreated that her son give her the

crutches to burn, but Freyo was firm. At last she burst into tears.

"Oh! Oh!" she sobbed. "It is not enough that I have had many troubles and cares in the past; each year my wicked enemy, the North Wind, steals a fortune in pennies from me! And now added to this I must suffer disobedience from my own ungrateful son." She sobbed and wailed until Freyo was nearly distracted.

"Oh, Mother!" he begged. "If you would only cease your weeping and look at these wonderful things I have made in your absence. Here is a clock-case with the four seasons carved upon it. The hours are told by twelve lovely nymphs dancing through the forest; it is a treasure worthy of a king. Some day a duke may come a-riding by and fancy it — then, who knows — my fortune may be made, and I would give it all to you, Mother."

In spite of all his pleadings, however, Dame Grumble would not look at his treasures. She was so deep in her woes that she could think of nothing else. She would not touch a crumb of supper but said mournfully that she had no heart for either food or drink.

Freyo sat before the fire, sad and desolate. With the scolding dame's return, the quiet and contentment of the little cottage had fled. "Ah," sighed the poor lad, "I have no doubt that Mother is right; perhaps I am wicked and ungrateful after all."

II

During the winter that followed, Dame Grumble led her son a dreadful life. He could no longer talk to his good friend, the Apple Tree, for she was sleeping her deep winter's sleep and would not waken until the spring. So while the snow whirled high without and piled itself in drifts at door and chimney, Freyo sat patiently carving his great oaken chests and settles. When he carved fields of wheat with wild fowl flying over, the poor lad fancied himself afield once more; when he carved forest scenes, he lived again the memories of his happy summer. If Dame Grumble spoke to her son, it was but to call him wicked and ungrateful. She often vowed she would forgive him if he would but give her the crutches to burn. But Freyo had a plan in mind. With

the first sign of spring, he meant to be off and seek his own way in the world, and this he could never do without his precious crutches. The poor lad had no desire to spend another winter with this cross, fault-finding dame.

Now, as was her usual fashion, Dame Grumble spent much time in planning means to spare the blossoms of the Apple Tree. It happened that on her journey she had found a book which told of orchard trees and how to care for them. So in this book Dame Grumble now began to study diligently. She found a picture of an apple tree encased with strong, coarse netting. This strong, coarse netting, so the book said, would protect the fruit and blossoms from all harm. Accordingly, Dame Grumble sat her down before her wheel and spun endless miles of heavy thread. From this she next wove yards upon yards of strong, coarse netting. Often and often Freyo begged his mother to cease this useless labor. The North Wind would soon tear the whole thing into shreds, said he. You may be sure Dame Grumble always had a sharp retort for him.

"Had I a son who was a comfort and a bless-

ing, I have no doubt that he would long ago have found a way to save my precious blossoms from the North Wind," she would say. "I daresay, too, that I would have had a harvest of golden apples long since. Even now I might be dwelling in some noble mansion with slaves to do my bidding and a different carriage for every day in the week!"

So the winter dragged on wearily. At last the snow began to melt, and the sunbeams to make bright spots on the kitchen floor. The hedges here and there showed patches of green leaves; the birds returned from the southland whither they had gone for the winter. Forget-me-nots and brown bells blossomed about the Apple Tree, and the green grass for miles about was thick with yellow buttercups. It was then the Apple Tree awoke from her winter's sleep and decked herself in clouds of fragrant, pinky-white blossoms. Then it was that Dame Grumble went forth from her cottage with yards upon yards of strong, coarse netting with which she covered her favorite tree. Seeing the bare places that marked the two missing branches, she cried out afresh that she was

a sad, sorrowful woman and had too many cares.

While Dame Grumble was thus occupied, Freyo unlocked the cupboard where he had hidden his precious crutches. But, alas! The wood of the Apple Tree was not suitable for such use, and the crutches fell to pieces when he touched them. Freyo tried to mend them here and join them there, but it was in vain. They broke again in other places. Now when Dame Grumble learned this, she vowed it was a just punishment for Freyo's disobedience. However, with her usual perverseness, she took no more interest in the crutches. She did not trouble to burn them, and there they lay in the cupboard for many a long day.

"You will obey your mother when she commands, another time, I daresay," she would often remark, and point to the useless, broken things.

Now that spring was come, it was not long before Dame Grumble's old enemy, the North Wind, came also. Shouting and hallooing he blew over the fields and forests one sunshiny day, and when he reached the Apple Tree, he stopped still in amazement.

"Ho! Ho! Ho!" laughed the North Wind, "who has thus cleverly covered the Apple Tree?"

"I have!" shouted Dame Grumble from within her cottage, where she had run to hide. "Now you had best be off, for you can never undo this strong, coarse netting I have woven; it is tied in a thousand tight knots!"

"Ah! is it indeed, Dame Grumble?" inquired the North Wind with mock politeness. "Will you kindly have patience for a little until I try my skill?" With that he blew a blast that unloosed all the yards upon yards of strong, coarse netting and bore them off like puffs of thistledown. Dame Grumble's heart sank; but, strange to say, the North Wind did not blow away the blossoms of the Apple Tree. Instead, he lingered about the cottage until night fell and played all manner of tricks to bring Dame Grumble running out. He blew soot down the chimney and blackened the clean-scrubbed kitchen floor; he put out her candle when she had lighted it for evening; and whisked her linen from the hedges into the fields and far away. Not one word of anger or reproach would Dame Grumble utter, even so. If the

North Wind would but spare the blossoms of the Apple Tree, nothing else mattered. At last the North Wind grew weary of his teasing and departed.

"Just you wait, Dame Grumble!" he called in farewell. "Some day I shall catch you unaware, and I will carry you off to that desert island that waits to welcome you as Queen of Grumblers!" Then he blew on his way.

Dame Grumble waited, fearful lest perhaps he would return, but the North Wind returned no more that spring. The blossoms on the Apple Tree began to wither, and presently tiny fruit began to form on its branches. It seemed at last as though Dame Grumble would gather the harvest of golden apples for which she had so longed; but even so, this cross, fault-finding dame was not content.

"Alack!" she often mourned, "if I had had this strong, coarse netting years ago, I would have had many a golden harvest long ere this. Without doubt this covering hath a charm above the power of the North Wind. Had I a son to assist me, I daresay he would have thought about it long since."

"But, Mother, I cannot help it that I am lame and do not assist you," sighed Freyo.

"But you can help it when you are wicked and disobedient; and wicked and disobedient you were when you cut the two stout branches of the Apple Tree. For now, though I shall gather golden apples, there will not be nearly so many because of your rash act."

So the springtime passed and the summertime came. Day by day the fruit on the Apple Tree grew larger, and day by day Dame Grumble took pencil and paper to count the number of apples that hung upon each branch. She tried each day to reckon just how many more she would have had but for the branches Freyo had cut off, and every day she grew vexed afresh. Dame Grumble would not permit Freyo to go near the Apple Tree. She vowed he might take a notion to cut down the whole tree, for all she knew.

The summer grew older; the meadows turned brown, and the fields grew bare. Dame Grumble watched eagerly for a sign which would show that the apples were turning to gold; but no sign she saw. The apples turned bright red

instead. The summer began to wane, and a sharp chill in the air warned Dame Grumble that winter was not far away. The maples on the hillsides flamed crimson and scarlet once again, and yellow leaves fell from the poplar trees like rain.

"Now can it be that you are going to disappoint me!" exclaimed Dame Grumble to the Apple Tree. "Why, pray, do not your apples turn to gold?"

"How you talk, Dame Grumble!" replied the Apple Tree. "You will be disappointed no matter what happens! Though I gave you a thousand golden apples, you would never cease to mourn that you might have had a hundred more had not Freyo cut off my two branches. Then you would make the poor lad's life more miserable than ever. I sometimes wonder that you are not ashamed to plague and torment him as you do. You do not deserve golden apples, and I will not give you golden apples. So you had best make haste and gather these red apples of mine before the frost will nip them."

But this Dame Grumble would not do. She

was assured that the red apples would turn to gold, in spite of the Apple Tree. For if young and tender blossoms yielded bright new shining pennies, did it not follow that the ripened fruit would be of purest gold? Dame Grumble so believed. "The Apple Tree does not love me and never did," she thought within herself; "it is but a plan to make me angry."

By and by the leaves fell from the Apple Tree itself, until its branches were quite bare and brown. The apples shone tantalizingly red, and then Dame Grumble realized at last that they would never change to golden, as she hoped. Now this new disappointment, you may be sure, did not tend to sweeten her disposition. All day she sat gazing mournfully at her favorite tree and wept bitter tears at her new loss.

"Oh, Mother, pray do not weep so!" begged Freyo. "You will make yourself ill. My store of wood is gone; but if you would bring me two stout branches from the forest, I would fashion another pair of crutches for myself. Then I would set off to make a fortune to take the place of this fortune you fancy you have lost."

"Fancy I have lost!" repeated Dame Grumble

scornfully. "The fortune I *fancy* I have lost! I do not fancy I have lost a fortune; I know full well I have lost a fortune. Besides, who would give a copper farthing for your clumsy chests and boxes!"

So all day long Dame Grumble dwelt on her woes. At night she sat sighing in the chimney corner until the little cottage quite close to the top of the earth was as dull and gloomy as though a thousand crows had settled suddenly upon it.

III

Now it happened at this time, when all Dame Grumble's troubles seemed too many to be borne, that the good dame and her son enjoyed a visitor. Visitors in that country quite close to the top of the earth were very rare, you may be sure. This visitor was not an ordinary sort of person; far from that was he, indeed. Because he journeyed ceaselessly about the earth and was well known to folk of many lands, he was called the Traveler. But though he roamed thus everywhere, the Traveler seemed never bound for any certain land or country but went his ways just as the winds of heaven went theirs.

The Traveler never remained long in any city or village, nevertheless he stayed long enough to do a kindness for some sad one, or to help some poor one on his way. Few people ever could agree about his age; the old thought him young, and the young thought him old. However, young and old alike agreed that the Traveler seemed possessed of magic powers to banish cares and troubles. Wherever he found quarrels and spites, he left love and kindliness; where he found envy, he left content; where he went once, the Traveler always found a warm welcome awaiting him on his return.

What was the secret source of the Traveler's noble qualities was a mystery to all folk. Some said the Traveler kept his cheerful spirit because of a certain great cloak that he always wore. This cloak, they said, was made of wool woven from the fleece of fairy sheep and had great powers of happiness. Others said that in a far-off country the Traveler had drunk deeply of a certain magic well, the waters of which were said to bless one with a kindly heart forevermore. Still others thought the Traveler's power over cares and sorrow lay in the plain wood

staff he always carried. But though the secret of his soothing charm was thus uncertain, certain it was that the Traveler paid a visit to Dame Grumble and her son one chill autumn evening, and the story of it all is this:

It happened one day, as the Traveler was walking along the road that led up to the country quite close to the top of the earth, he chanced to meet the North Wind. Now the North Wind loved to tease and play his tricks on every one, and so he seized the Traveler's hat and blew it five fields off; he swept stinging dust into his eyes and wrapped his cloak so tightly around him that but for his staff the Traveler would have stumbled. Though he was so bothered and annoyed, the Traveler did not complain. He loosed his cloak and wiped his eyes of the dust, then once again he set upon his way.

"Ah," said the Traveler, "it is a strong wind that blows here; but how clean the road is swept in consequence! It is also a good wind."

The North Wind had expected blame instead of praise and was abashed. So straightway he

brought back the hat, and then he blew gently in the direction which would best suit the Traveler's footsteps. So it was that this visitor knocked at Dame Grumble's cottage one evening just at candlelight. The Traveler begged her hospitality, and Dame Grumble bade him enter. She placed a chair before the hearth and began to prepare a supper for him. All the while she complained most bitterly that she should thus receive a guest in her kitchen. When she set forth the supper, Dame Grumble sighed because the bread was brown instead of white.

"Never sigh, Dame Grumble!" urged the Traveler with his kindly smile. "Seldom have I seen a pleasanter kitchen, and never have I eaten better fare. Your brown bread is fit for a king, and your broth would give courage to a weary army!"

"That is all very well for you to say, good sir," replied Dame Grumble sulkily, "but you do not know all my troubles." She did not often find one to give ear to her tale of sorrow, and if the Traveler would, Dame Grumble meant that he should hear her. Above all else

in the world, Dame Grumble loved to talk about her woes.

"Then perhaps after supper, when you sit before the fire, you will tell me of your troubles, good dame," said the Traveler. You may be sure Dame Grumble agreed. Indeed, so eager was she to begin that she hummed a lively tune to hasten her work. At the unusual sound of his mother's singing, Freyo left his bench to learn the cause of it. When he saw the Traveler, he greeted him with warmth.

"We do not often have a visitor, good sir," said he, "so I shall leave my work and join you by the fireside."

"But first," exclaimed the Traveler, "you must let me see this work of yours; you must dearly love it, thus to be about it after darkness has fallen and all men sit to take their ease."

"Good sir," replied Freyo, "my work is wood carving, and I do love it better than the whole world!"

The Traveler regarded the great chests and clock-cases with deep admiration and begged Freyo to tell him of his work; of whom he had learned his skill; and whence his designs had

come. To these questions Freyo replied that he did not know, he supposed he had taught himself.

"Good sir," said he, "some folk make pictures on a canvas with bright colored oils and brilliant paints, and other folk make pictures with fair words, as they tell wonder tales. I have not skill like those, but I have dreamed bright dreams and have loved to sit and carve my dreams upon my chests of oak and walnut wood. Think you that my skill is fair or that my pictures would please aught beside myself, who carved them?"

"I have no words to tell you how high I hold your skill," declared the Traveler, "and as for the pictures you have carved in wood, they would delight a queen or please a king as well. They are truly lovely."

"Then, good sir," replied Freyo, "to the Apple Tree that stands before our door you must give all this praise. The summer before the summer that has just passed, this good tree of her own accord did give me her two stoutest branches, from which I made a pair of crutches. Then I could wander in the woods from dawn

till dark, and hear the birds sing songs the whole day long. 'T was then I learned to dream my finest dreams; it was like heaven, sir!" The poor lad sighed in memory of the happy time, and before he could say more, Dame Grumble interrupted. The good dame could no longer restrain her tongue or her impatience, it seemed.

"Now, good sir!" cried she, "you have heard my son; you must hear me. The Apple Tree was not an ordinary tree, as my son knew very well! He did wrong to cut the smallest twig whilst I was gone.

"Each year, when the cuckoo came calling in the spring, there was no finer sight in all the world than the Apple Tree. So thick was it with blossoms that scarce a branch or twig could be seen. Its fragrance floated on the breeze, drawing every bee and butterfly for leagues and leagues about. Surely with such a tree I might look for a bounteous harvest, one would think. But, alas! No sooner was the Apple Tree thus decked like a bride than my wicked enemy, the North Wind, would come and blow these blossoms far away. But mark

you now the wonder of my tale: a few blossoms would sometimes fall beneath the tree, and when they fell they made a chinking sound like that of small coins in children's banks. When they had withered, I always found bright, new shining pennies where they had lain.

"Now from this curious fact I have believed that when the Apple Tree would bear fruit, the apples would be of gold. If young and tender blossoms yield bright, new shining pennies, does it not follow that the ripened fruit should be of purest gold?"

"It would seem so, good dame," agreed the Traveler. "What then were the apples — silver, perhaps?"

"Indeed sir, no!" replied Dame Grumble with deep feeling. "For all I know, in cutting off the branches of my favorite tree, my wicked son bewitched it. For though the Apple Tree bore fruit this year, it bore naught but red apples of a common sort; I scorn to gather them!

"Oh, Oh!" wept Dame Grumble, bursting into tears once again at the memory of her loss. "Thus to have my own son so wicked and dis-

obedient, whilst I, footsore and weary, was seeking for the fortune in pennies which the North Wind had stolen from me these many years! It is too much! I am sure, good sir, you will agree that I have many troubles, and that it is not right to call me Dame Grumble because I sometimes speak of them."

"I had rather agree that you have also many blessings, good dame," returned the Traveler, with his kindly smile. "Come, let us draw our chairs before the hearth, and perhaps you may learn to see them too. There is nothing that does so help us see our blessings as the bright flames dancing up the chimney when all the world without is dark and cold."

But ere she sat down, Dame Grumble recollected yet another grievance. "And added to my other troubles," she complained, "I have a son who is lame and must be always a burden instead of a staff."

The Traveler nodded gravely. "That is a sorrow, I agree," said he, "and I have no doubt, good dame, that your motherly heart must often ache with the pity of it all."

To this Dame Grumble made no reply; she

began to think instead. For years her mind had been so busy with the plans for her blossoms and her golden harvest that it had quite forgotten how to think of aught else. As for her heart, it ached only when she thought of the fortune in pennies that the North Wind had stolen from her, and that she had not found.

"Then too, Dame Grumble," continued the Traveler, "I must tell you that I think the North Wind no more than a rough playful fellow, and not wicked as you say. Only this afternoon he stole my hat and ran away with it, but before I had gone twenty yards, the amiable fellow had brought it back to me again. And since he blew me to your cottage door, I will henceforth claim the North Wind for my friend."

"Then since it was the North Wind that brought you to our door, I will no longer call him my enemy, but instead will call him my friend also," declared Dame Grumble with a smile. In the firelight her face suddenly looked so sweet and gentle that Freyo sighed deeply. Dame Grumble heard the sigh, and asked her son the cause of it.

"I sighed because I wished you would smile

often, Mother," replied the lad. "You looked so sweet and pleasant."

"And now," began the Traveler, "since we are all so happy, let us begin to think about the good dame's difficulties, — the fortune in pennies which she sought and could not find, the precious blossoms which the North Wind blows away each spring, and the Apple Tree which should have borne apples of gold, but which bore red apples instead. For these three evils we must find a remedy without delay."

Now all the while she had been sitting with the Traveler by the fireside, because of his magic power, Dame Grumble had been thinking busily. Not of fortunes or of golden apples, or yet of red apples either; instead, quite to her own surprise, she was thinking of how wearied she had grown of all these things. She wished suddenly that she would never hear of them again. Judge then of her son's astonishment when she answered the Traveler in the following fashion:

"Good sir, although I sat me down to talk about my troubles, now that I have told them, they seem light and trifling; I am indeed amazed

that I have heeded them at all! Though for years and years I have quarreled with the North Wind because he robbed me of a fortune, I seem suddenly to care no longer for fortunes or gold or riches, or any such.

"For as I peer into the flames, it comes to my mind that there are many in this world not so blessed as I. Many a one is hungry and has naught to eat, while my larder is filled; some are cold whilst I sit in comfort before a fire of pine knots that sputter and glow. I see now that I have many blessings." Dame Grumble did not know she had these thoughts because of the Traveler.

"Ah!" cried the Traveler, "did I not say the blazing logs helped one to see one's blessings, and was I not right?"

"I have often fancied that was so, good sir," agreed Freyo, "and now, since my mother no longer wishes to talk about her troubles, perhaps you will tell us tales of your journeys; you are a traveler and have seen far distant lands."

"Pray do, good sir!" begged Dame Grumble too. "It is long since my son and I have heard

tales of any sort. Also from your great wisdom I have a notion that we shall be highly entertained."

So the Traveler told them tales of other lands. He told of strange birds with bright-hued feathers of such great length that they swept upon the ground like queens' trains. He told of burning mountains and of fiery lakes, of lovely flowers blooming in the snow, and gardens that grew underneath the sea. The wind without howled dismally; within, the flames leaped high and made queer elfin shadows to dance on the walls; the clock ticked off the minutes into hours, but still Dame Grumble and her son sat listening, wrapt in wonder. At last the candles snuffed out, and naught but the back log smoldered and glowed in the darkness.

"Now good sir," cried Dame Grumble, "I am sure you must be weary." She bade him take the best room, but the Traveler refused. The comfortable chair in which he sat was all he needed, he declared, and he bade the good dame and her son good night.

When they awakened next morning, he had

gone; but on the chair they found his staff. Fastened to the staff there was a note which bade Freyo use it in place of the crutches, and said when he had no longer need for it to give it to some other one that had.

"Mother," said Freyo, when he had read the note over and over again, "would this not seem to say that I might one day walk without the aid of either crutch or staff? What think you of it?"

"It would seem so, my son," replied the dame, "and then how happy I would be!"

A knock at the door startled them both. Dame Grumble, thinking it was the Traveler returned, hastened to open; but it was not he. It was a king's herald dressed in scarlet satin and silver laces.

"I am the herald of King Silversword," said he. He bowed low to Dame Grumble as though she were a duchess.

"And I am Dame Grumble, at His Majesty's service," answered Dame Grumble, with a bow equally fine.

"Then hearken to my message," began the herald. He unrolled a scroll of parchment, set

thick with king's seals and written all in silver letters, and read the following proclamation:

"Know ye that the apple crop of the whole world has failed. From north to south, from east to west, there is not one apple to be found, nay not for a king's ransom. Now that of itself could be borne, none the less, for apples be great luxuries. However, the little Princess Silverstar, the only daughter of King Silversword and Queen Silverland, has fallen ill and craves constantly for red apples. The doctors and the medical men hold no hope for her recovery unless she has to eat the fruit she craves. Wherefore, if good Dame Grumble will sell a dozen or more red apples to His Majesty, King Silversword, she may name any sum of gold or portions of rich jewels in payment; nay, whether she demand both gold and jewels, or even His Majesty's entire fortune, it shall be hers in exchange for her red apples."

"Come now, good dame, what do you say?" asked the herald, as he rolled up the scroll once more.

"I say, good Master Herald, that my red apples are not for sale," the dame replied, "but

if they have a power to restore the little Princess Silverstar, she may have them all. They shall be a gift from me and my son Freyo."

Now the herald was amazed at this. From the humble surroundings, he knew the good dame and her son were naught but worthy peasants, and he reasoned wisely that riches would not be amiss. Accordingly, he tried to persuade Dame Grumble to accept some gift, a tract of fertile land, a noble mansion, or at least a bag or two of gold; but Dame Grumble was firm in her intention and would not be persuaded.

"If my red apples have a power to heal," she declared, "they will have thrice that power if given with a good heart instead of in barter or exchange." So the herald besought her no more. He called the servants and bade them strip the tree, and then, with many thanks, he hastened on his way.

"Oh, Mother!" cried Freyo, as they watched the royal coach depart. "How fine of you to refuse such riches! All your life you have so longed for a fortune, too!"

"Indeed, my son," replied the good dame

earnestly, "the only fortune I desire now is the fortune that you will one day make for me. However, I must confess that all the while I spoke with the king's herald, it seemed that the Traveler was close beside to tell me what to say, and that the words were not my own. Now, was that not a strange thing — and he gone these many hours?"

As she went about her daily tasks, the good dame seemed to have forgotten her old woes and troubles and Freyo whistled like a thrush as he sat working at his bench. The little cottage had never known such a happy day. Freyo's tools seemed to fly as though by magic, and the gloom that had been slowly settling down upon the little cottage quite close to the top of the earth now seemed to take wings and fly off. It was just at sunset when they heard the blowing of horns and trumpets, and again the coach of King Silversword drew up before their door.

Freyo, wishing to hear news of the Princess Silverstar, seized the Traveler's staff and hobbled toward the door. But wonder of wonders! No sooner had he leaned his weight upon it

than he grew tall and straight as a young poplar tree. Like an arrow he sped from the cottage door, and Dame Grumble rubbed her eyes lest she should wake and find herself a-dreaming.

"Now look you, good Master Herald!" she cried in amazement. "You saw my son only this morning, and he was lame as lame could be; and now, behold, he walks as well as you or I! Truly, say I, it is a day of miracles!"

"Thou sayest right, good dame!" declared the herald. "It is to tell you of another miracle that I have come hither. Only this morn the little Princess Silverstar did eat but one of the red apples, and to the delight and wonder of the court, she began to grow stronger. When she had eaten three or four, the doctors and medical men pronounced her cured; they believed that the red apples coming as a gift, rather than for barter or exchange, had worked an important part in this miraculous recovery. To-night there is great feasting and rejoicing in the land of King Silversword, and the praises of Dame Grumble and her son are sung by rich and poor and high and low alike." The herald

then unrolled another scroll and read the following proclamation:

"Wherefore His Majesty, King Silversword, to show his gratitude, doth now create Freyo the First Wood Carver of his kingdom and master of all other wood carvers in the land."

Freyo could scarcely believe his good fortune and begged the herald to read the scroll once more. Then he began to shout with joy. "And only to think, Mother!" he cried, "I am no longer lame, but can walk about like all the youths whom I shall meet at court."

"I am rejoiced!" declared Dame Grumble, "but if there be feasting in all the lands of King Silversword, there should likewise be feasting in our little cottage. You are whole and strong, and the Princess Silverstar is restored to health through our gift. Let us be merry too!

"And you, good Master Herald," continued the good Dame, "though our food be plain, if happy hearts alone be needed, there will be no merrier household in all the world than ours to-night. Will you not sup with us?" The herald vowed he would be honored, and so

Dame Grumble popped another pudding in the steaming pot, and they all sat down. While the three ate and drank, the good dame and her son recalled the wonder of their visitor the evening before.

"One could scarce believe the change the Traveler wrought upon my mind and heart," said the good dame. "Before he came, I was scolding and complaining always from morning until night. Yet since he entered into my door, I have had scarce a vexatious thought."

"It would seem, good dame, that the Traveler was some gentle spirit come from afar," agreed the herald. "I do not doubt that he and his magic arts are the secret cause of these miracles we have seen to-day."

When he departed with the herald the next day, Freyo left behind the Traveler's staff; the good dame fancied it would be a guard against the return of her low spirits. She leaned on it as she stood by the cottage door and waved her son a farewell and thought with pride how handsome he was now that he was tall and straight. Thus we must leave Dame Grumble in the country quite close to the top of the

earth, and journey off with Freyo on the way to seek his fortune.

IV

At the court of King Silversword, Freyo was welcomed with much honor and ceremony. Dame Grumble's gift to the little princess had made a thousand good friends for him, it seemed. King Silversword looked at him with eyes of gratitude; Queen Silverland could not praise him enough. The Little Princess Silverstar took much pleasure in the tales that Freyo told her of the North Wind and the Apple Tree. Before many days had passed, Freyo had become the child's favorite courtier, and was a favorite of the whole Court likewise. The noble lords vowed that Freyo had wisdom beyond his years and vied with one another to do him kindnesses. The noble ladies declared that Freyo had a kindly heart as well as handsome features. They said his gentle manners were worthy of a duke's son. King Silversword gave orders that a fine workroom be built at the top of the royal palace and fitted with every sort of tool that a wood carver might fancy. He

also sent great ships a-sailing off to distant lands to bring rare woods for Freyo's work.

When all things were in order, Freyo began his first task for the great King Silversword: it was to carve seven great chests which would be used as dower chests for the little princess by and by. So fine was the design upon each chest, and so delicate and intricate the carving and the traceries, that seven long years passed before the seven chests were finished. In all that time, although the princess grew to be a lovely maiden, tall and stately, she still took pleasure in the tales that Freyo told her of the Apple Tree that grew up in the country quite close to the top of the earth. Now when these seven chests were shown at court, it was the opinion of wise men and artists from far and near that their equal could not be found in all the world. King Silversword was greatly pleased, and in reward he commanded that Freyo be made Duke of Freyoland. Ten thousand leagues of land in the country quite close to the top of the earth were given him for his domain, and a noble castle was likewise built there for him.

The seven dower chests were next filled full of gold and jewels, and orders for a splendid ball were given. Princes and dukes as well as lords and marquises from every court on earth were bidden to attend, and from this assemblage of noble youths, the Princess Silverstar would choose her husband. Some gossips at the court declared it was assured that Princess Silverstar would choose Prince Goldenmines, the richest prince in all the world. Others thought that she would surely favor Prince Palmire, because he was so handsome. Judge then of the surprise of all when Princess Silverstar chose Freyo for her prince and begged her royal parents to consent.

"Is it not to Freyo's noble gift, so long ago, that we do owe our daughter's life!" exclaimed these grateful monarchs. "How then shall we deny him for our daughter's husband? Announce the betrothal, heralds!"

Then straightway the wedding day was set. Dame Grumble journeyed down from the country quite close to the top of the earth and was made welcome by Queen Silverland and her noble ladies. (To be quite formal, we should

now call the good dame Duchess Freyoland, for as mother of a duke, she had likewise become ennobled. However, as the good dame liked her old name best, perhaps we had best call her just Dame Grumble after all.)

In order that all folk might rejoice in goodly earnest at her wedding feast, the Princess Silverstar besought her father two favors. First, that he would forgive all debts and moneys that his people owed the crown, and second, that he would take no taxes for a whole year and a day. She then commanded that every subject be given fine new holiday attire and a well-filled purse, according to his rank and station. In all the history of the kingdom there was not known a finer feast than this. The noble lords and ladies rode and drove or danced at splendid balls. The common people sang or played games on the highways and feasted on the village greens. Then when the seven days of fun and feasting passed at last, and Freyo with his lovely bride drove off to their castle, Dame Grumble sat beside them in the royal chariot. But not for long could the good dame content herself in their splendid castle. Her heart be-

gan to yearn, and she began to pine most sadly for her home. Though Freyo and his lovely bride begged her to stay and dwell with them forever, the good dame would not hear of it.

"Ah, no, my children!" cried Dame Grumble. "Long, long ago, 't is true, I wished for a noble house and fancied I would be happy as a queen if I might live in one. Since the visit of the Traveler, I have grown much wiser. I know that I can be happy as a queen if I am but content. So in my little cottage with the North Wind and the Apple Tree for friends, I shall dwell all my days."

So saying, Dame Grumble bade Freyo and his lovely bride farewell, and leaning on the Traveler's staff she set off for home. She reached her little cottage on a bright spring day, just when the Apple Tree was decked in clouds of fragrant, pinky-white blossoms, and looked as lovely as a fairy tree. Dame Grumble gazed with satisfaction on her favorite tree, and as she gazed it came to her mind that in all the noble sights she saw at court, she had seen nothing half so lovely as the Apple Tree in spring.

It was not long now before the North Wind came roaring over field and forest in his usual fashion, but when he saw Dame Grumble he ceased suddenly. He asked most civilly how the good dame did and whether she had liked the life at court. To all his questions Dame Grumble made most amiable reply and hoped the North Wind's health was fair. For, if you will believe me, these two old enemies were now good friends. They had not had a cross word or a quarrel since the evening of the Traveler's visit long ago.

"And now, Dame Grumble," said the North Wind, "for seven long years you have ceased your scolding and grumbling, and if you will it so, the spell that bound the Apple Tree may now be broken. Only command me to cease my mischief, and I will touch your blossoms nevermore. Likewise command the Apple Tree to bear you golden apples, and you shall have them."

"But North Wind!" cried the Apple Tree. "First tell my mistress what you have done with all the pennies from my blossoms. My mistress has a heart of gold and needs not golden apples."

Dame Grumble smiled with pleasure that the Apple Tree should speak thus kindly of her. Well she remembered the olden days when she had often been most harsh with her favorite tree, and she hoped the tree had now forgiven her. "The Apple Tree praises my heart too highly," said Dame Grumble modestly. "Still, North Wind, I must own that I have been most curious about the pennies from the blossoms you have blown away."

"The pennies were not stored in some hollow of the earth, as you supposed, long, long ago, when you set out to find them," said the North Wind. "Each springtime, when I blew the blossoms of the Apple Tree around the world, I dropped the pennies at the feet of poor children who had none but me to love them. These poor children then ran pell-mell to the nearest sweet shop to spend their pennies and were happy as larks in consequence."

"The Apple Tree is right!" declared Dame Grumble. "For all the golden apples in the world, I would not rob a single poor child of its penny. So blow your fiercest, North Wind; and Apple Tree, see to it that there be a penny

for every orphan child on earth." The North Wind obeyed, and Dame Grumble smiled to see the lovely blossoms flying through the air like April snow.

And so the good dame settled down to dwell in peace and happiness. Kings' palaces and dukes' castles were all very well, said she, but after all, there was no place like home. As for climate and a clear blue sky in summer, there was no place to equal the country quite close to the top of the earth, Dame Grumble thought. Often and often, just at candlelight, Dame Grumble peered into the dusk and gloom in hopes of seeing the Traveler coming toward her door; but he came not. Sometimes she asked the North Wind for news of him, but he could tell her little.

"I think," said the North Wind, "that the Traveler still journeys round the earth, but always in advance of me. Sometimes I travel over cities where all folk are content, and where there are no strifes nor quarrels. I hear folk speaking of a noble traveler who has lingered with them, and I have often thought it is the Traveler whom we seek. If I should ever meet

him, I shall tell him that Dame Grumble waits each evening to welcome him."

"But my mistress, and you too, North Wind," said the Apple Tree, "have you not heard it said the Traveler visits only those who are sad and sorrowful, or who are afflicted with cold, selfish hearts? If that be true, he will return to our little cottage no more; there is no need for him."

Now it would seem that the Apple Tree was right, for the Traveler returned no more. And in all the world there was not such another place for comfort and good cheer as Dame Grumble's little cottage quite close to the top of the earth where the North Wind blew fiercely each spring.

CHAPTER II

A TALE OF THE NORTHLAND KINGDOM

I

LONG, long ago, in a certain far-off region of the world, there was a land of ice and snow, and this land was called the Northland Kingdom. There each year the ice broke on the rivers and flowed out to the sea, and the snow melted in the valleys. Then corn and rye and other good grains would grow; but these mild seasons were short, and for the most part ice and snow abounded everywhere.

Added to this, in the time of my tale there was no light in the Northland Kingdom. All time was deep gray twilight or inky darkness, and there was no day. Neither Moon nor Stars had ever pierced the overhanging gloom and mists, and the sun had never shone upon the Northland Kingdom. Reindeer flitted silently

through this land of shadows, and great white bears made their homes in icy caves by the sea. When birds of passage reached this land of darkness, they trilled their softest songs and went to rest, and when they waked, they soared away in search of brighter lands. But knowing nothing of the light of day, the folk of this dark land mourned not its lack and were content to dwell ever in shadow. A thousand silver lamps and myriads of waxen tapers gleamed always in the palace of the king; and in the fields the workers sowed and reaped by light of flaming torches. The herders built great fires on the hillsides, and in their light and warmth told their flocks. The housewives spun by firelight.

Now in the time of which I tell, the good king Tamna ruled the Northland Kingdom. He was a wealthy sovereign even as the wealth of kings is reckoned. King Tamna owned a thousand mountains of gold and silver and the fish of ten thousand streams. Herds of reindeer and caribou beyond all counting were also his, as well as the forests and plains over which they roamed. Beside all this, King Tamna was sovereign lord of one hundred princes of the

Northland Kingdom. These hundred princes paid King Tamna tribute; that is to say, they brought him yearly certain portions of their flocks and herds and of their grain and gold and of all that was theirs, for such was the law of the Northland Kingdom.

Now good King Tamna had a daughter, Maiden Matanuska, Princess of the Silver Birches. She was so called because her marriage portion was a forest of silver birch that lay between two swift-flowing streams and reached from sea to sea. Some folk thought Maiden Matanuska was part wood sprite, for in spite of dark and shadows she would roam for hours in the paths and lanes among the birches and was not afraid. The Maiden Matanuska understood the language of the trees and learned from them just when the ice and snow would melt.

The silver foxes that roamed this forest were her pets. They frisked and followed her about like faithful dogs; and though their furs were worth a king's fortune, Maiden Matanuska would not consent to have them slain. For this the silver fox were grateful and loved her dearly. They taught her secrets never known

before by men, and from their wisdom Maiden Matanuska learned to tell when icy winds would blow and snow begin to fall and when the grain would grow again. Maiden Matanuska understood the songs of birds as well, and when the birds of passage sang of other lands, where there was light of day, she listened eagerly. But when she begged these birds to sing her more, they answered her with sleepy chirps, for birds would not sing long in that dark land.

It was from these sweet songs the birds of passage sang that Maiden Matanuska came to know that there was such a thing as light of day. The more she heard, the more she longed to see this marvel. While she wandered in her birchen forest, she would dream bright dreams of other lands, she knew not where, — lands where ice and snow were not, but where gay flowers bloomed instead, and there was day as well as night.

"Oh, my father," said she with a sigh, "how pleasant our land would be if all the shadows and the gloom departed for a time and we had light of day as well as night."

"Ah, yes, my daughter," said King Tamna,

with an answering sigh, "but how to brighten this dark land I know not. For your sake I would that I could; but for myself, I care not. Now I am growing old and soon must journey all alone to lands where light or darkness matters not."

"Oh, my father! Speak not of that time," cried Maiden Matanuska, bursting into tears. She loved her father tenderly and knew he spoke of the time when he must die. "If you were not here with me, neither light nor darkness would matter to me, and I should be desolate and lonely."

"Then speak no more of your longing for light," replied the king. "It grieves me that I cannot give you what you most desire. But before I have departed from this life, I hope to see you wedded to some brave prince who will love you and protect you in my place."

And though Maiden Matanuska vowed she wished no prince at all, her father gave her protests no heed. "There is a handsome youth who wears a feather mantle with whom I see you wandering in the forest. Who is he?" King Tamna asked.

"He is Prince Kenai of the burning mountain," said the maiden. "He, too, has dreams of light and tells me wonder tales which I do love to hear."

"Prince Kenai is the poorest prince in all the Northland Kingdom," said the king; "but if his wonder tales please you, I shall say nothing."

Now, as may be supposed, there was no lack of suitors for the maiden's hand. Indeed these hundred princes of the Northland Kingdom each longed to marry her. She was the fairest maiden in the land, and moreover, she was as lovely of mind and manner as she was fair of face.

There came at last a certain night when good King Tamna sat in state to greet his tribute-bearing princes, and Maiden Matanuska sat beside her father. In robes of purple velvet bordered deep with ermine and thickly sewn with threads of beaten gold, with golden crown and sceptre too, King Tamna looked a very king of kings, — a monarch of great state and dignity. The Maiden Matanuska, robed in shimmering gossamer white, her golden hair, that fell about her like a cloak, crowned with a wreath of leaves, and in her hand a holly branch, looked like some

angel newly come from paradise. She seemed some lovely maiden in a dream, who would perhaps take flight and float away in the encircling gloom and mists. These hundred princes knelt before the throne and begged the lovely maiden's hand in marriage.

At this the king was troubled, for clearly Maiden Matanuska could not wed them all, and how to choose among them he knew not. At last the royal counselors advised him in the following way:

"Now since these hundred youths be princes all, and therefore suitable in rank to wed your daughter, let Maiden Matanuska for herself decide which one she 'll wed."

When this was told, the Maiden Matanuska sat some time in thought and then she spoke. "I'll wed the prince who brings to me the thing which I have never seen before, for which I long with all my heart, and which I shall love well."

The hundred princes then departed to their various lands and began to seek among their treasures to find the thing they thought would please the maiden. Some princes brought her

toys of ivory wrought in wondrous ways, and some brought robes of doeskin, soft as satin, white as milk, embroidered all in beads of many colors. But these proved not the thing for which the maiden longed. Some princes brought her great carved silver chests, and some brought chains and bracelets made of purest gold; but none of these were what the Maiden Matanuska wished, and all these princes failed to win their suit. So fared they all until at last there were but three to try their fate, — Prince Kathalan, Prince Katala, and Prince Kenai.

Now Prince Kathalan was the greatest warrior of all the Northland Kingdom. He had won a hundred battles and boasted that he would win a hundred more. He gloried in his warlike fame and doubted not that Maiden Matanuska would favor him above all others.

Katala, who was wealthiest prince of all, rejoiced because his slaves had lately found a diamond mine, the like of which was never known before in all the Northland Kingdom. Prince Katala had great faith in the power of his riches and was full sure that Maiden Matanuska would smile upon his suit.

Prince Kenai dwelt in the land of a burning mountain whose fires destroyed his forests and laid waste his lands, and the land itself, moreover, was not enriched with gold or silver or with any other metal. Because of this, Prince Kenai was called poorest prince of all; but because in all the Northland Kingdom none other dared venture near this burning mountain, he was counted bravest prince of all.

Of these three, Prince Kathalan spoke first. "Oh, Maiden Matanuska, Princess of the Silver Birch," cried he, "I bring to you this magic bird of battle, my raven. Black as its wings are, wise is the bird, and moreover it hath the gift of speech and prophecy. With this magic raven as my omen, no warrior can worst me in battle, and I can conquer legions. So marry me, O Maiden, and I will make you the most powerful queen the world has ever known."

The Maiden Matanuska shook her head. "You have not guessed my meaning rightly," answered she. "I care not to be a queen of power, for such queens are unhappy, I have often heard; and I hate the thought of battle. So keep your magic raven, warrior prince. I

love far better the gentle doves that flutter around me in my forest."

Prince Kathalan departed in a rage, and Prince Katala stood before the throne.

"Oh, Maiden Matanuska, Princess of the Silver Birch," cried he, "I bring to you a golden casket filled full of gems called diamonds which you have never seen before, and which you will love well, for they are truly lovely. And these are not a thousandth part of all my wealth; so marry me, O Maiden, and I will make you the richest queen the world has ever known."

The gems within the casket flashed forth purple fire and shone like brilliant stars; but Maiden Matanuska sighed again.

"I care not for great riches, Prince Katala," answered she, "for I have riches of my own in goodly store. As for thy diamonds, — though they be truly lovely, as you say, I should as soon love the icicles that cluster round my casement in the storm. They are as hard and cold."

Prince Katala departed likewise in a rage, and Prince Kenai bowed low before the throne.

"And now what treasure do you bring to win

my hand, brave prince?" asked Maiden Matanuska.

To which the prince replied, "I bring you none, and neither do I seek to win your hand. Your heart is what I do desire, O Maiden, for I do love you truly and would die to serve you.

"Now in your father's halls are treasures and all riches in great store. Fair silken banners hang the walls to shut the cold drafts out; a thousand gleaming silver lamps light the way; great chests are filled full of ornaments of beaten gold, as well as many other things my eyes have not discovered. With all this wealth heaped high on every hand, if you still long for that which you have never seen, think you that in my barren land it will be found? In my land so poor that even crows forsake it?"

"Well said, brave prince," the king replied, "and if you have not treasures such as men hold dear, you have indeed a noble gift of speech. But even so, some gift or token you must surely bring, or otherwise you had not come at all but stayed within your barren land. Come, tell us what it is."

"I bring no treasure save the treasure of a

wonder tale which you will hear," said Prince Kenai, and then began to tell.

"Within my land, as well you know, there lies a burning mountain from which men flee in fear, but which I love. Now when my mountain has burst forth in flames, and tongues of fire that reach to heaven light the sky of all the world, I have seen wondrous things. I have seen other lands far distant, where ice and snow are not, but where the green grass clothes the hills and plains; where poppies shaped like golden chalices grow thick, and birds sing hour after hour. And in these pleasant lands of which I tell, there is a time of light as well as dark. This time of light lasts many hours long and is called day."

"Then tell me this, Prince Kenai," cried the king. "How comes this light of day to other lands? It comes not to this dreary realm of ours, where it would be most welcome."

"I'll tell you that," replied the prince. "There is a wondrous traveler called the Sun who high up in the clouds does journey ceaselessly about the world. He has great power over night and causes darkness to break forth

in light wherever he does turn his face toward any land.

"And now farewell, good king and Maiden Matanuska, whom I love. I go to seek the Sun and beg him to return with me and shine upon the Northland Kingdom as he does on other lands upon the earth. Then will we have the light of day as well as night, and Maiden Matanuska will have that which she has never seen, for which she longs with all her heart, and which she will love well. Farewell."

Prince Kenai wrapped his flowing feather mantle around him and took leave of the king. The Maiden Matanuska walked with him through her forest where the silver birches grew down to the borders of the sea, and there they parted.

"Oh, my brave prince," wept Maiden Matanuska, "my heart cries out against your going, for since the day I met you I have loved you dearly; but I was always fearful lest my father bid me wed another because you had no fortune. Therefore I set the riddle which only you did guess. And now, may all good powers guard you on your quest and bring you safely back to

me. While you are gone, the waking hours will often find me standing on this shore, awaiting the glad sight of your return."

"My beloved maiden!" sighed the prince. "With such sweet faith and love to bless me, I cannot fail." He rent his flowing feather mantle in two parts and wrapped a portion of it around the maiden. "I would I had a richer token for you, love," said he. "But even so; this feather mantle is no mean gift. Who wears it will be ever safe from icy blasts and snow and cold and will be ever young and fair as on the day they wore it first. Now kiss me in farewell and promise me that when I do return and bring the Sun, you 'll marry me."

The Maiden Matanuska kissed him thrice and promised, and springing into his boat, Prince Kenai sailed away. She stood upon the shore and blew him kisses and caresses, but soon his form was lost in darkness and the mists, and Maiden Matanuska was left forlorn.

II

Now in those olden days, when princes journeyed around the world on errands for the maid-

ens whom they loved, the space of time they usually were gone was a year and a day. So when a year and a day had passed, the Maiden Matanuska often wandered through the birch wood and stood upon the border of the sea. She strained her gaze far to the south to see the sight of any sail; but Prince Kenai came not.

She asked the birds of passage if they had seen her prince, and sometimes they had news of him. "Oh, tell me, ye wild Gulls, of the wild skies," she asked, "do you know aught of my brave Prince Kenai? He wears a feather robe like mine and seeks in lands afar to find the Sun for me."

"Ah, yes," replied the Gulls. "We've seen a prince so dressed, and he was sailing westward on the sea and seemed to seek the Sun."

"And found he what he sought?" cried Maiden Matanuska eagerly.

"Alas!" the Gulls replied. "The truth is, he did not. For many evenings when the day was done, we saw this prince sail westward. He hoped to meet the sun just where the sky bends down to meet the sea, but though he sailed for days and days, the place

he sought seemed sailing too, and so he reached it not."

"That is sad news," the maiden sighed. "But when again you see my prince, tell him that all my thoughts are his, and I am sure he cannot fail."

Another time she asked a Kite-bird had he seen Prince Kenai.

"Oh, yes, dear maiden," the Kite-bird made reply. "And he was in the Southland, whither he had gone to seek the Sun. But he was worn and wearied with much wandering, and the road was long; and by the time he reached there, the Sun had long departed on his journey to the Eastland."

"That is sad news, good Kite-bird," said the maiden, "but when you see my prince again, pray tell him that my hopes are his, and I am sure he cannot fail to win his quest."

And still another time did Maiden Matanuska ask an Auk to tell her of Prince Kenai.

"I saw him," said the Auk, "and from the feather robe he wore I judged him first to be some bird. In lands where scarlet poppies lull the weary travelers to deep sleep, and waterfalls

make thunder down the mountain sides, Prince Kenai I saw toiling up a rocky slope where it is said the Sun does rise."

"And did he reach the top of this steep slope?" asked Maiden Matanuska.

"Now that I could not say," the Auk replied, "for I was flying swiftly and paused not at all. But this I know; the Sun 's a mighty, glowing being and is like to burn all those who venture near his presence. Unless Prince Kenai have some magic charm, I doubt if the Sun will heed him."

"That is the saddest news of all," sighed Maiden Matanuska. "But even so, I shall not weep but pray for him instead. When you next see my prince, good Auk, tell him that all my love is his, and I 'll await his coming though he remain a thousand years."

"I shall," replied the Auk, and soared away.

And so the Maiden Matanuska waited while the time sped on. Wrapped in her feather mantle, she wandered through the birches like a lonely spirit, and the trees were grieved for her. She still dreamed dreams and loved to think about the time when she would greet her prince;

when the light of day would banish all the gloom and shadows of the Northland Kingdom. Still years passed on, and still Prince Kenai came not. King Tamna feared him dead or that perhaps he had lost his way and was a wanderer forlorn; but Maiden Matanuska knew no fears.

"The journey to the Sun is long, my father," she would say, "and my brave prince no magic hath to make it short. He will return and bring with him this wondrous traveler whom he seeks, and what a pleasant place the Northland Kingdom then will be!"

But as the time went by there came great sadness in the Northland Kingdom. The good King Tamna laid him down to sleep one night and never waked again. All folk both high and low mourned deeply, for good King Tamna had been like a kindly father rather than a king. When at last the time of mourning passed, Lord Boreas, cousin to King Tamna, came to rule the Northland Kingdom.

Now Lord Boreas was a cruel sovereign, a tyrant, and the people were unhappy under his rule. He made harsh laws, and if these laws were not obeyed, he punished with severity.

Lord Boreas, it was whispered, had an evil power over the icy winds and rivers in the Northland Kingdom, and few dared resist his will. His anger, it was said, had caused many a village to be blown into the sea and noble cities to be flooded with a rush of waters. But while the rule of this harsh king fell hard on all alike, on Maiden Matanuska it fell hardest. Lord Boreas was her guardian. He scorned the simple customs of the good King Tamna and straightway ordered all things to his liking. He planned to fell the Maiden Matanuska's forest and build a city in its place.

"However, my sweet cousin," said Lord Boreas, "I 'll wait until the next mild season is at hand. Then when the silver foxes come from their winter's sleep, my hunters shall lay traps for them and slay them every one. Their skins will sell for gold, and for your marriage portion you shall have a noble city and ten thousand chests of gold, and I myself will marry you and make you queen."

Though Maiden Matanuska's heart was sad, and she wept bitter tears for her loved trees and pets, she made no protest at her cousin's words.

She feared his wrath, and so she bowed her head submissively. But when the palace slept and all was still, wrapped in her feather mantle, she stole softly out. Down through the shadowy lanes and misty isles among the silver birches she sped, until she reached the border of the sea. Then through the gloom she peered to see the sight of any sail; but no sail she saw.

"Oh, my beloved prince," she wept, "I fear that when you come 't will be too late. For rather than to wed my cruel cousin, I 'll fling myself into the sea and die!"

"Now, Maiden Matanuska, what grave sorrow can this be?" a gruff voice spoke beside her. It was old Reynard, chief of all the silver foxes. He had stolen from the burrow to learn how went the season and to know when he might waken all his sleeping tribe.

"Oh, Reynard, my good friend!" exclaimed the maiden. "Since first you did begin your winter's sleep, I have had many sorrows. My father, good King Tamna, is no more, and now my cruel cousin Boreas rules the Northland Kingdom." She told her tale of sorrows, and old Reynard listened, all alert.

"Without a doubt, your cruel cousin Boreas hath an evil power over the winds and streams," said he, when she had finished, "but he shall learn it is not simple to outwit the cunning fox. Now in the past, as you, dear maiden, have protected me and all my tribe from harm, so will we now protect you in your need. Come, follow me; do as I bid, and all will yet be well." So saying, old Reynard then led the maiden down beneath the earth to where the silver foxes still slept their winter's sleep, and birch roots wound about in and out.

"Now, Maiden Matanuska," said Reynard, "if you will place a feather from your mantle at the root of every tree, they will be safe from cold and icy blasts, in spite of all Lord Boreas in his wrath may do. Then when that 's done, wrap you all warmly in what 's left of it and rest you safely with my people. When Prince Kenai comes I 'll waken you."

The Maiden Matanuska did as Reynard bid, and far beneath the earth she hid herself from cruel Boreas. 'T was well she did, for when her cousin found her fled, his anger knew no bounds. He sent great parties out to search the land,

and he himself, with flaming torch in hand, set out to seek her in the forest. Among the birch trees he found traces, showing that the Maiden Matanuska passed that way. Upon a branch he found a scarlet ribbon she had worn, and in the thorn-bush was caught a silken scarf; but though he sought for hours and called her name, Lord Boreas could not find the maiden.

"Because I do not know the winding paths among the trees as well as you, you think to trick me, Maiden Matanuska," he cried at last, in fury, "but you shall know my vengeance now." Then climbing up the steep slopes of a near-by mountain, and summoning all his powers of evil, he commanded thus:

"Rise, rise, ye rivers that flow swiftly to the sea, until the birchen forest in the valley be all flooded with a mighty rush of waters! Then blow, ye chill winds, from the east and north until these waters to a solid wall of ice are all transformed."

The rivers, obedient at his command, then rose swiftly and overran their banks so that soon the tallest trees were all submerged, and

nothing but a lake was seen. The winds began to blow their wildest, and the lake became a solid bank of ice that threw off chilling mists.

Then Boreas called the people of the Northland Kingdom and addressed them thus: "Behold the fate of Maiden Matanuska and beware! For so shall perish all who dare defy me."

The people wept and mourned in secret for the maiden whom they dearly loved, but there were none who dared cry out against the cruel Boreas.

III

Meanwhile Prince Kenai, bent upon his quest, was wandering still in lands afar. Each morning in the dawn he saw the wondrous traveler that he sought rise in the eastern sky and scatter clouds of darkness; and each evening, when the day was done, he saw the wondrous traveler set far in the west and take with him the day. But though Prince Kenai journeyed all around the earth and halfway back again, he found no road to reach the Sun, and he was sad. Still he continued on his way with hope and courage.

It happened once, while he lay sleeping on a

mountain, an eagle wounded by a poison dart dropped down beside him.

"Ah!" cried the eagle bitterly, "from the great cloak of feathers which you wear, I thought you to be one of my own race. But since you are a man and I am wounded and can fly no more, I must prepare to die. You 'll take my beak and claws to show your fellow men your skill at hunting and stuff my body to adorn your walls. Alas! That I, a prince of air, should come to this!" the great bird moaned.

"Fear not that I shall take your life, good eagle prince," said Prince Kenai. "For though I am not of your race, I am a prince of earth, and to my mind all princes, whether of the earth or air, should be as brothers."

Prince Kenai fetched water from a near-by spring and dressed the eagle's wound with healing herbs. For many days he did the same until the pain grew less, and by and by the great bird's wound was healed.

"Now, brother," said the eagle, when he could fly once more, "you 've served me nobly, and in my turn I shall serve you to prove my gratitude. You told me of your quest to reach the

Sun, and I will tell you this. There is no road to reach the Sun that mortal man may tread. The way lies through the clouds, and indeed, 't is only I and all my brother eagles that have strength to travel there. So get you on my back without delay, good Prince Kenai, and we shall start."

Straight upward soared the eagle through the clouds, and when the day was nearly done they reached the splendid mansion of the Sun. Good luck was theirs, because the wondrous traveler had returned from his day's journey round the world and was well pleased to see them. He bade them welcome and asked the reason of their visit.

"Oh, Golden Sun," said Prince Kenai, "far in my land which is the Northland Kingdom, I learned that you had power over night and brought the light of day to lands wheresoever you did turn your face. Therefore I set out to seek you and entreat you to return with me and shine upon the Northland Kingdom, which is a land of night and darkness. All around the world I 've followed you in vain, and never would have met you had not this good eagle borne me thither on his wings."

"Prince Kenai does not tell the reason why," exclaimed the eagle. "He saved my life when it was in his power to slay me, and, therefore, I have brought him hither, as was his wish." The eagle told his tale, and when the Sun had heard, he praised Prince Kenai.

"Now see," the Sun declared, "the mighty power of a kindly deed. Had you, Prince Kenai, slain this noble bird, as most men would have done, he had not brought you to my mansion, and you could not have begged this boon of me. For your reward, I 'll go with you. To-morrow morning when I rise, we 'll start for this dark land, and thou, my eagle, bear Prince Kenai on thy wings that he may all the faster lead the way."

For many days these three companions journeyed on through soft white clouds and summer skies until thick, gloomy mists came into view. The wind blew chill as though from fields of ice and snow, and the dull skies were leaden gray. From this, Prince Kenai knew the Northland Kingdom was at hand, although a pall of darkness overhung the landscape, and nothing could be seen.

For many days these three companions journeyed on through soft white clouds. — *Page* 86.

"I 'll soon change this!" exclaimed the Sun, and then began to shine full on the Northland Kingdom. Straightway all the scene began to change as though by magic. The lowering mists dissolved and rolled away in rosy clouds or formed gay-colored rainbows in the skies; the skies themselves changed to bright blue, all flecked with white instead of leaden gray. The birds of passage wakened from their sleep and sang their sweetest songs. Upon the mountain side the snow began to melt away, and many-colored flowers bloomed where it had been. No bank of ice or snow, however high or deep, was able to withstand the genial warmth of all the beams the Sun poured down. The wall of ice that bound the birchen forest broke and with a roar plunged down into the sea. Then upon the waves were seen a thousand glittering banks of ice that seemed like noble palaces afloat. The birch trees all began to bud and bloom with silvery leaves that rustled softly; and green grass, thick with violets, went creeping underfoot.

On learning what had come to pass, old Reynard wakened Maiden Matanuska and led her

from the burrows until she stood once more upon the border of the sea.

"Oh, my beloved Prince Kenai!" she cried, as she beheld him. "Though in your absence I have suffered many sorrows, now that you are returned, I 'll soon forget them all. How marvelous is the light of day! And how divine the Sun!"

"And tell me, maiden," said Prince Kenai, "now that you see all around the light of day, dost love it still as well as in the old dark days when you did dream of it?"

"Indeed, I find the light which you bring more lovely than my wildest dreams," she answered. "To see the smiling skies, the blue sea all a-sparkle with great glittering banks of ice, the green grass thick with flowers everywhere, and over all the Sun shine down in wealth of golden beams — I knew not how to dream a dream so fair; and next to thee, my prince, I love the light of day above all else."

Here they heard shouts of cheer and praise, and soon great multitudes of folk went running through the forest. "A miracle! A marvel 't is," cried they, "that Maiden Matanuska is

alive!" And then, in deep amazement, they listened to the tales the Maiden Matanuska and Prince Kenai told. Such tales were rare, even in those olden days of wonders. When both were done, the Chief Counselor of the Northland Kingdom spoke.

"Now listen, all good folk," said he, "and learn that in this very hour the cruel Boreas, fearing the great power of the Sun, has fled the Northland Kingdom, and we are now without a king. Whom shall we choose?"

"Prince Kenai! Prince Kenai!" cried the people. "'T was he who gave our Maiden Matanuska the magic robe that saved her life; and he it was who brought the Sun to brighten our dark land. He was our benefactor; let him be our king!"

"Wilt be our king, Prince Kenai?" asked the counselor.

"If Maiden Matanuska marry me and be your queen, I shall be king," said Prince Kenai. "What say you, my loved one?"

"I 'll marry you, my prince," she answered, "for I do love you truly. Our feather mantles which have so nobly served us in the past shall

be our wedding robes; the birds our royal choristers; the birches tall our stately chapel walls, and the blue sky above all, glowing with the Golden Sun, shall be our ceiling. Your good eagle and my good Reynard shall stand beside us and let all folk both high and low be bidden to our feast to wish us joy and happiness."

All things were done as Maiden Matanuska ordered, and they were married on that very day. A royal feast was made, and sports and games were set; indeed there was a holiday that lasted forty days. The Sun was bidden to attend, and so well pleased was he that he stayed in the sky above the Northland Kingdom and set not once until the forty days had passed, and all that time was burning daylight.

Then, when the holiday was done at last, the Sun took leave. "Farewell, all folk, and you good king and queen," said he. "And though night come when I have turned my face from you, fear not. For in the morning I will come again and bring with me the light of day." Which thing he did.

And from that time the Northland Kingdom was no more a land of darkness and of gloom.

The overhanging mists returned no more, and when 't was night, the Moon and Stars shone softly down. The Sun his face turned toward there every day, and though his beams were pale and wan when he was in the Southland, he stayed each summer forty days and nights and set not once; which custom he continues to this very day.

Prince Kenai and the Maiden Matanuska reigned many years and were beloved by all their subjects. Though scores of years passed, by virtue of their feather mantles they were always young and fair as on the day they wore them first. Indeed, 't is said they never died, though folk who dwell still in the Northland Kingdom differ as to what became of them. Some say that when Prince Kenai and Maiden Matanuska grew weary of this life at last, they wrapped their feather mantles round them, and borne upon the eagle's wings, set off to visit at the mansion of the Sun. But other folk declare that on dark misty nights a pair resembling them are often seen to wander through the dim aisles of a certain birchen forest where the silver foxes are found.

CHAPTER III

THE LITTLE TREE THAT NEVER GREW UP

LONG, long ago, when the world was very young, so young that the flowers and trees and grasses had voices and talked with each other, or sang with the breezes that blew softly around them, there lived in the midst of a forest a very little tree.

Now, though the Little Tree was straight as an arrow and had glossy green leaves, she was the most unhappy little tree in all the world. She could not sing with the winds, and neither could she speak to the other trees around her. These other trees often spoke to the Little Tree and asked her questions. When she did not answer, they thought the Little Tree stupid and sulky. These other trees that could sing and speak began to grow tall, and after a time they grew so high their topmost branches seemed to

touch the sky. Then, even though the Little Tree had spoken, they could never have heard her. These other trees grew tall as giants. The Little Tree grew each year, it is true; but she grew so slightly that it could scarcely be noticed. She was greatly ashamed of her small stature.

As the seasons went on, the branches of the tall trees grew so very thick that they shut out the light down in the forest. Then the Little Tree could not see the sun at all, and one by one the ferns and flowers at her roots died from the dampness, and the Little Tree was all alone! Nothing broke the silence of the dark, still forest save the calls of the birds when they returned each year to build their nests, or the sound of the branches swaying in the breeze. Then there came at last one soft spring day when the Little Tree waked from her winter's sleep and began to sing. She was so happy that she sang for hours; but alas! there was no other tree to hear her or to answer her song. So the Little Tree, though she now possessed the voice for which she had longed, was more lonely than ever before.

At night, when all the world was sleeping, and while the Night Wind roamed the forest, the Little Tree would weep softly to herself because she was so sad. Then, after a time, her lament grew to be a song, a very sad song, it is true; but oh, so very beautiful! The Night Wind, who was fond of singing, came to listen each evening for the Little Tree's lament, and as he blew upon his way, he carried her song to the Stars. Now it happened one night the Little Tree was so sad and lonely that she could not sing; instead, she wept until her tiny branches shook with sobbing.

"Oh," mourned the Little Tree, "I am so lonely here! I wish I could die. If only I might burn on some cottager's hearth or warm poor children's hands; but alas, I am the most useless tree that grows!"

The Night Wind heard the Little Tree sobbing, and going close, whispered softly to her:

"Oh, Little Tree, please do not be so sad. What does it matter that your singing voice came after all the other trees had grown too tall to hear you, or that you are such a very little tree? Your voice is so sweet and lovely that

the birds of this forest now model their choicest songs on yours. Each night I carry your songs to the Stars, and they too have sung your lovely music."

"Oh, Night Wind, do you tell me true?" begged the Little Tree. "For I am such a little tree, how can the Stars hear me?"

"They hear you thus, my Little Tree," replied the Night Wind, and brushed aside the branches of the tallest trees.

Then looking up, the Little Tree beheld the Stars high up in the heavens shining down on her. They seemed to smile and beckon as she watched, and so she sang her sweetest songs to please them. The Night Wind and the Stars themselves sang with the Little Tree, and made such lovely music that had any one been listening, they would have thought they heard sweet strains from paradise. But all this happened when the world was very young, and there were but few people dwelling on it.

"And now, my Little Tree," the Night Wind said, when he had dropped the branches of the tall trees once again, "pray do not wish for some woodman to cut you down. I would miss

you sadly, if you were to go away from the forest."

Farther on in the forest, the Night Wind met the Spirits of the Woods. They were two sister spirits robed in floating garments made of mists. They roamed the forest and cared for all the trees. They knew how long each tree would dwell in the forest and when the woodman's ax would fell it. The Spirits of the Woods possessed a magic bag of dreams, and from this bag the Night Wind begged a dream for the Little Tree.

"Ah," he pleaded, "the Little Tree is so sad and lonely, the other trees have grown so far away they cannot hear her sing, and neither can she talk with them. She would dearly love a beautiful dream from this dream bag of yours, Spirit."

"Ah, Night Wind," replied the Spirit doubtfully, "there is but one dream left, and that is the Little Tree's dream of the future. If we give it to her, you must promise that you will not answer her questions concerning it. For it is a strange dream and will puzzle her greatly. Will you promise?"

From this bag the Night Wind begged a dream for the Little Tree.— *Page* 96.

"I promise," said the Night Wind, and blew upon his way.

And after that night, the Little Tree was not lonely or sad. She never became a joyous tree — her youth had been too sorrowful for that — but she was content. Each night, when all the forest filled with creeping shadows, she sang her songs to the Stars, and she came to love the Night Wind dearly. Each night the Little Tree dreamed the dream the Spirits of the Woods had given her, and strange to tell, it was always the same dream. It was such a pleasant, lovely dream that sometimes the Little Tree was puzzled, and wondered whether she really lived in her beautiful dream, and only dreamed that she lived in the forest.

Each night the Little Tree dreamed she floated far away, until she reached a palace which was set on a high hill. Within the palace was a great hall richly hung with silken tapestries and gleaming softly with light that shone from carved crystal bowls. Within this palace hall a great king and his court were seated, and sweet strains of music floated on the breeze. But the strangest thing of all was this: the

Little Tree often thought she heard her own songs in this palace hall. She was not sure, but she was greatly puzzled. She knew that she had dwelled always in the forest, and how could she know the music of noble lords and ladies? Then one night in her dream the Little Tree was startled to hear the sound of her own voice singing the songs she had so often sung to the Stars. She pressed eagerly to the palace window to see within, but because of her branches she could not go very near, and she could not see. Then came the dawn, and her dream floated far away.

All through the day, the Little Tree called again and again to the tall trees and asked them of her curious dream; but, of course, they could not hear her. She waited eagerly to see the daylight fade, and when the Night Wind came, she questioned him:

"Oh, Night Wind," cried the Little Tree, "will you tell me of my dream? I am sure I heard my own voice singing; but how could it be that noble lords and ladies within that palace hall would listen to me? For am I not the least of little trees?"

But the Night Wind did not tell her truly. He had given his promise that he would not, and so he answered her, saying:

"Now that I do not know, my dear, but though you are indeed the least of little trees, you are the only Little Tree in all this world to me. Of noble lords and ladies and their ways I know nothing, for do they not shut me from their homes and hearths when I would enter and warm myself? But now, Little Tree, it grows late; will you not sing for me?"

Thus with the Night Wind and the Stars for company, the Little Tree lived on for many years. From them she learned much wisdom and came to know about the great world which lay beyond the forest, and that all trees would one day go there. And all this time the world was growing older, and the forest was not so silent as it had been in the time when the Little Tree first dwelled there. Sometimes the woodcutter's ax rang out, and the Little Tree would hear a great tree come crashing down to earth.

"Oh, why must I leave the freedom of the forest and be torn limb from limb in some

wretched mill!" cried one of the tall trees, as he fell close by the Little Tree one day.

"Ah," replied the Little Tree softly, "you would not wish to dwell forever in this forest, would you? In the world there is much that a great tree may do to bring happiness."

"Who is it that speaks to me thus gently?" asked the Fallen Tree. "I do not know the voice, although I thought I knew all trees growing in this forest, for I was among the first trees to grow here."

"And so was I," replied the Little Tree. "Do you not remember the Little Tree that could neither speak nor sing? I am she. For though I am ages and ages old, I am scarcely taller than yonder little fir of ten seasons."

"In those days we thought you stupid and sulky, Little Tree," replied the Fallen Tree, "but by your speech I now can see that we were wrong. Who has taught you all your wisdom, and have you not been lonely all these years?"

"Indeed, I was very lonely," said the Little Tree. "Even after I could sing, it was no better. The flowers and ferns had died, and there was

none to hear me or talk to me. One night I wept and wished to die, and the Night Wind, who is of a kind heart, cheered me with words of praise. Since then I have never been sad, for I have had a lovely dream each night, and I have sung to the Stars."

But this the Fallen Tree could not believe, and so he answered sharply:

"Now, Little Tree, how can that be? Tall as I was, and high as I stood when I was monarch of this forest, never once could I send my songs to the Stars, although I tried to do so many times. Now surely such a little tree as you could not accomplish what a monarch failed to do! You have learned wisdom without doubt, and you sing very sweetly, I daresay; but take care lest your dreaming lead you in untruthful ways."

"Oh, pray believe me!" cried the Little Tree. "Wait only until the twilight comes, and the Night Wind himself will tell you so."

"More foolish talk!" scoffed the Fallen Tree. "The Night Wind is but a feeble creature to a monarch of the forest, such as I. When I stood aloft in all my glory, the Night Wind could not

bend the smallest twig of mine unless I willed it so."

"That is true, my friends," spoke a gentle voice beside them. It was the voice of the Night Wind, for all unknown to them, darkness had fallen. "Because you were so proud and held your branches firm against my gentle breezes, never once did I carry your songs to the Stars; but I have done so for the Little Tree." Then he brushed aside the branches of the tall trees, and the Little Tree sang to her shining audience so far above in heaven. She sang until the Fallen Tree slept, and then the Night Wind gently dropped the branches until the forest was all dark once more. Then he kissed the Little Tree farewell and blew upon his way.

Now, as more people came to dwell upon the earth, more trees were needed every year to shelter them. The forest was no longer dark and silent. The woodman's ax rang out, and here and there the sun shone down where groves of noble trees had once stood. But even so, the ferns and flowers and grasses did not bloom again. The woodcutters made dusty roads and

trails, and heaps of dead leaves eddied in the breeze. At last one day a certain king gave orders that all remaining trees of this forest should be cut down. He planned to build a noble city where the forest stood. Now charcoal fires flared all night, and herds of oxen tramped the whole day through, and soon a dreary waste of withering branches whose brown leaves crackled dismally was all that remained of the noble forest.

"Ah, Little Tree," the Night Wind mourned, "there is no longer any need for me. When the forest stood, it was my work and pleasure to brush the fallen leaves and lull the trees to sleep. Indeed, were it not for you, I would be desolate. Each night I tremble lest I shall not find you awaiting me."

"Ah, Night Wind," replied the Little Tree softly, "it is because you love me that you fear to lose me; but do not be troubled. I have seen great trees fall to my right and to my left, and small trees likewise, yet no one seems to want me. I am such a little tree; I am sure that you will find me here forever. That does not grieve me, even so, for I have come to love you

dearly, and it would break my heart to be parted from you."

Then one dull winter's day, the Little Tree felt a human hand laid on her slender trunk, and she knew her fate had come. She was such a little tree that it took but two blows to fell her. When the Night Wind came again, he found the Little Tree moaning with the pain of her wounds. He caressed her tenderly and begged her to say her pain was better.

"Oh, Night Wind, the pain is truly better since you have come," whispered the Little Tree bravely, and died in his arms.

When the Night Wind knew the Little Tree was gone, he flung himself down on the earth beside her, and wept and wailed so bitterly that the Spirits of the Woods came from the ends of the world to see what troubled him.

"Ah," sighed the first Spirit. "How sad it is the Night Wind should be parted from the Little Tree. Could we not make him a mortal, so that he may meet her again in the world?"

"Agreed," replied the second Spirit. So while the Night Wind slept, the Spirits of the

Woods changed him to a mortal and called him Robello.

Thus it was that some time later a youth called Robello came to dwell on the outskirts of the noble city which stood in place of the great forest. Now this Robello did not till the soil, and neither did he herd flocks on the hillsides. Instead, at evenings, he played his violin so sweetly and so sadly that some folk could not tell his music from the wailing of the winds. People from that region, as they passed his cottage at nightfall, paused to listen to Robello's playing, and many a one wiped a tear from his eye at the memories it stirred. Robello's fame began to go abroad, and wise men learned in the arts of song declared that if Robello but possessed a fine violin, the world could hear no better music.

Now, at this time it happened that the king (the same who had ordered the great forest cut down) received the gift of a rare violin. The maker of this violin vowed that its like was not to be found the whole world over, for when 't was touched with the bow, it sent forth a sobbing sound like the cry of a broken heart.

The maker of this rare violin besought the king and begged that no mere fiddler be allowed to touch it, and that a music master should play it always. The king agreed and accordingly commanded that all who played the violin should appear at the palace. Robello went in company of a thousand other players.

The palace of the king was set on a high hill, and as Robello entered, he seemed dimly to remember it, although he knew well that he had never been within its gates before. The king and court sat waiting within a great hall richly hung with silken tapestries and gleaming with lights that shone softly through carved crystal bowls. The violin players were gathered together, and to Robello fell the lot of playing first.

The king himself placed the violin in Robello's arms, and slowly, as though in a dream, Robello drew the bow across the strings. With the first notes wakened memories that had long been slumbering. Then as he played, Robello felt the great hall grow dim, until at last it seemed to fade away, and he saw naught but a vision: the deep dark forest just at dusk, and he was

once more the Night Wind caressing the Little Tree.

"Ah, my Little Tree," he whispered, as he bent lovingly above the violin. "This is the dream that you did love so dearly. Do you remember me?"

"Ah, Night Wind," sang the Little Tree, "although they call thee by another name, to me thou wilt be the Night Wind forever. He who fashioned me thus spoke truly when he said I sobbed like a broken heart, for my heart has been broken with longing for thee. Let us sing the songs we sang to the Stars so long ago."

Then Robello played as he had never played before, and the violin sang as never violin had sung before. When the last notes died away, there were tears in the eyes of the noble lords and ladies, and the king sat silent for a time. At last he spoke, and ordered that all other players be sent away, and declared that none save Robello should ever touch this rare violin.

So Robello remained in the palace of the king and was made chief musician to his majesty, and never had the Little Tree sung so sweetly in the forest as she sang now at Robello's

magic touch. Robello played at all court festivals, and nothing had such power to soothe the king as had Robello's music when he played his violin at nightfall.

Then came a sad day when his servants went to waken him and found Robello dead, his beloved violin clasped closely in his arms. The king and all his court mourned the passing of Robello for many days. Then one evening, just at dusk, they buried him with his beloved violin still clasped closely in his arms, and strewed his grave with boughs of trees. And in that region, to this day, there are some folk who say that when night falls Robello can still be heard playing his violin within the palace hall; but others say this is not right; it is the Night Wind calling softly to the Little Tree that never grew up.

CHAPTER IV

THE TALE OF PUNCHINELLO

THERE lived once long ago, in days of jesters and court fools and harlequins, a certain clown called Punchinello. This Punchinello, like all others of his trade, whitened his face and painted it in grotesque fashion. He wore gay satin robes of many colors all hung with silver bells that jingled when he danced, and pom-pom slippers turned up at the toes. This Punchinello was a clown of clowns, and his droll dances and his merry tricks and songs had made thousands laugh.

Punchinello traveled around the world in company with a circus. Whenever this circus reached a city, it formed a great parade before it entered. Then would the people throng the streets and highways, eager for the show. They clapped their hands when lions roaring in their

cages and elephants led by their keepers passed along; but when this famous Punchinello, prancing and twirling, came in view, the crowds cheered wildly with applause.

"Oh, welcome! Welcome, Punchinello!" they would shout.

The ladies threw him flowers and children blew him kisses. Kings and queens had often hailed him thus, for Punchinello pleased all folk. Those who were sad and those who sorrowed often sent for Punchinello when the circus show was done, and he would dance and sing to cheer them. But for this service he would take no gold or present. So though he grew to fame, this Punchinello grew not rich.

"It is enough that I can make sad faces glad," said Punchinello, and wrapping his great cloak about him, he would steal away, leaving happiness behind him.

"My store of wealth lies in the golden smiles my antics bring," he often said, "and when my merry songs and dances please the world no more, I shall be poor indeed." But with his light, fantastic dancing, and his songs and jests, with his twirlings and his leapings, — was it

likely that the world would ever cease to smile on Punchinello? The world is always fond of fun and laughter.

"Punchinello is the greatest man in all the world," some folk said when they had seen him dance and heard him sing.

"That is not right," said others. "He would be emperor if that were true; but Punchinello is the greatest man in all the circus."

"But neither is that right," still others said. "For if he were, he would be owner of the circus. But Punchinello is the greatest clown in all the world." And on this all folk agreed.

Now on its way about the world, the circus chanced to journey to a city where a king and queen held court. These royal folk and all their court watched the gay procession from their balconies and were delighted. The king and queen sent heralds, saying on a certain night that they would grace the show and to be sure that Master Punchinello played before the royal box. Then as the pageant wound upon its way, with banners flying and with music of the fife and drum, they passed a building where the sick were tended. It was a hospital. No eager

faces gave them welcome here, and lest they should disturb the sick, the fife and drum ceased playing. Punchinello fell to walking soberly along. Suddenly he chanced to spy a tiny, wistful face pressed to the window pane. Then Punchinello bounded lightly up the ladder, and leaping into the room, began to dance and twirl about to please this little child.

"And does my dancing please you, little one?" asked Punchinello when he paused.

"Oh, yes, sir!" cried the child. His name was Beppo. "Please dance again for me. It makes my pain grow better."

"Alas! I cannot, little one," said Punchinello, pointing to the circus that was passing. "I must make haste to join my friends again."

"Then would you come to-night when it is dark and dance for me?" begged little Beppo. "The pain is always worse when it is dark, you know."

"Indeed, I 'll come, my little one," said kindly Punchinello, and his gayly painted face grew sad. "Just leave your window open, little one, and I 'll steal in and dance for you and sing you to the land of happy dreams."

And that night, when the circus show was done and all the lights were out, while other tired players slept, this kindly Punchinello wrapped his cloak about him and stole out underneath the stars to visit little Beppo. The little lame child was delighted with his songs and dances, so kindly Punchinello vowed that he would come each night and do the same, while the circus remained in the city. Each night the child lay waiting for him eagerly, and how he hugged and kissed this Punchinello when at last he came!

"Last night I dreamed of running through the woods," cried little Beppo to him one night. "I saw tall trees that seemed to touch the sky and heard the birds sing in their nests. I never had a dream like this before, and your sweet songs did give it to me, Punchinello. Come, dance and sing for me."

Then Punchinello danced his best. His slippered feet like lightning flew; the bells upon his robes rang out, and he would twirl upon his toes until his many-colored baggy robes stood out and he seemed like a brilliant human top. He jumped, he twirled, he leaped high in the air

and bowed before the little cot as though it were a royal throne. When he at last grew weary, he would stop, but then the child would beg for more.

"Oh, please, dear Punchinello," he would say, "just once again. It makes my pain grow less to see you whirl." Then Punchinello could not refuse, and he would whirl and twirl again until he was too weary to do more. Folding little Beppo in his arms, he sang him lullabies until the child fell fast asleep. And so the nights vent on.

The nurses noticed that little Beppo's cheeks grew plump and that his eyes grew bright. He said his pain was better, and they thought it was the medicine. They knew nothing of this Punchinello. He entered each night through the window and departed the same way. The circus folk said Punchinello was not well and told him he must rest.

"Our show would be as nothing if it were not for you, Punchinello," they declared. "To-morrow the king and queen will come to see us play, so rest you well to-night that you may dance your gayest for them." Though Punchi-

nello promised, late that night, when all the world lay sleeping, he stole away to dance for little Beppo.

"Oh, Punchinello!" cried the little lame child. "I 'll tell you of my dream. I dreamed I wore a spotted satin robe like yours and pom-pom slippers turned up at the toes. I dreamed I danced and twirled as lightly as you do yourself. Now is that not a pleasant dream for one who cannot even walk?"

"It is, my little one," said Punchinello. "Come sit upon my knee and wind your arms about my neck. Now tell me, has your pain been less to-day?"

"Much less, much less, good Punchinello," said the child. "Indeed, I think your dances and your songs have charmed it all away. I think about my lovely dreams by day, and lie and wait for you by night, and have no time for pain, it seems. Come dance for me, my Punchinello."

"To-night I 'll sing instead, my little Beppo," answered Punchinello. He was weary, and when he whirled his head grew dizzy. "I 'll sing you a song of ships that sail through seas of clouds;

and trees as sing the world to sle when winds do blow."

But little Beppo wished to s him dance. "See, Punchinello," said he softl , 'around your neck I tie my locket. It is my only treasure. They say my mother placed it o me when she died. It has a bluebird paintec on it which is the only bird I 've ever seen. Now wilt thou dance for me, dear Punchinel' ?" He kissed the clown's queer painted face, .d Punchinello danced.

And never had he danced so well before. As though he heard afar the music that the fairies make at midnight, he waltzed and twirled faster and yet faster, pausing not at a He pranced, he leaped and spun upon his toe as though he were a dancing doll wound up to dance so long. The little lame child watched him eagerly, and as he watched, as though he too heard magic strains from fairyland, he sp up from his cot and straightway danced a whirled about in Punchinello's footsteps.

"Look, look, dear Punchinello!" little Beppo cried. "I am no longer lame but dance as well as you yourself."

"Look, look, dear Punchinello!" little Beppo cried. "I am no longer lame."— *Page* 116.

But Punchinello, whirling like a leaf, made no reply. He sang his gayest songs and leaped so lightly in the air, there seemed to be a thousand harlequins, and little Beppo followed lightly after. Suddenly the child stopped, for Punchinello was no longer dancing.

"Oh, my good Punchinello!" he exclaimed. "Why did you run away? I 'll follow after you," and down the ladder he swiftly sped. He saw the white tents shining in the moonlight. "Indeed, I 'll join the circus with my Punchinello," said he to himself, "and travel around the world with him."

But alas! Poor Punchinello had not stolen off, as little Beppo thought. For while in his wild dance that charmed the lame child's pain away, poor Punchinello felt himself grow ill. His head grew giddy, and at last he fell upon the floor, and there the nurses found him in the morning. They placed poor Punchinello on the bed where little Beppo had lain for so many years, and wondered whence the clown had come.

And so it was the king and queen who went next day to see the show were displeased because the famous Punchinello was not there to

dance and jest for them. No other clowns or harlequins would please their royal majesties, and so they left in anger. They bade the circus owner strip his tents and in that very hour depart, and when another morning came, our little Beppo found himself in a strange city with the circus folk. At first these circus folk were puzzled what to do with him, but as the child could dance and cut droll capers, they made for him a spotted satin suit and gave him pom-pom slippers turned up at the toes. They would have called him Little Punchinello, but this the child would not allow.

"Good Punchinello was my friend," said little Beppo. "And 't was from him I learned to dance before I ever walked. I will not take his name, but I will seek him everywhere until I find him."

Some circus folk thought Punchinello had run off to join a show of traveling jugglers, and others thought perhaps he had grown tired of dancing and grimacing. Then by and by they ceased to talk of him, and all forgot him, save little Beppo.

Meanwhile poor Punchinello lay in a raging

fever. The nurses thought that he would die, for he was very ill. But after a long time the fever left him, and then they knew he would grow better. He asked one day for little Beppo, but they could tell him nothing of the child.

"We came to waken him one morning, but the child was gone and you were lying ill," said they. "We could not see how this could be, for little Beppo was too lame to walk; but though we searched the city, he could not be found."

Another day poor Punchinello asked about the circus, and again the nurses shook their heads.

"The circus folk have gone long since," said they. "The king was angry with them and bade them go in haste, 't is said. We cannot say which way they went."

When Punchinello was all well at last, he rose and donned his many-colored robes that jingled when he walked. He had grown thin and pale, and they became him poorly, but he had not money to buy others. He wrapped his great cloak all about him and started out to earn his bread. Poor Punchinello was too weak to dance;

he could not plow or dig; he had not been so trained. And so at last this famous Punchinello stood upon the highways and sang for pennies that good-natured people threw to him.

"I am the famous Punchinello," he would sometimes say. "Have you not heard of famous Punchinello of the circus?"

But those who heard him laughed in scorn. "If you be famous Punchinello of the circus," they would say, "why sing you then for coppers like a beggar, and where is the circus? You are not Punchinello, but a fraud."

Thus poor and friendless, Punchinello started out to seek the circus. His wanderings led him into many lands, and often he met folk who told him that the circus had passed there. But Punchinello, journeying afoot, could never travel fast enough to overtake the circus. His pom-pom slippers soon were torn by stones along the highway, and he went barefoot. His satin robe of many colors faded and grew worn. Punchinello patched here with yarn and there with bits of leather cloth or sacking, until the colors had all fled, and it was naught but rags sewn all together. Poor Punchinello danced no more,

for ragged robes and dancing do not fit; but even so, his voice was sweet and clear as ever.

"So I am not yet poor, despite my rags," he would say bravely to himself. "For yesterday I caught a golden smile from one who flung a copper; and who knows? Perhaps to-day I may again be favored."

Then one day in his wanderings Punchinello awakened to the music of the fife and drum. He saw gay banners flying and hurried to the highway with the crowds. It was the circus he had sought so long, and as he saw his old friends marching by, poor Punchinello's eyes filled with tears of joy. The lion tamers with their roaring beasts strode by, the elephants in scarlet blankets decked, the jugglers next, and then a little dancing clown who stepped and pranced in drollest fashion.

"Oh, welcome, Beppo! Welcome!" cried the crowds, and Punchinello saw it was the lame child he had known.

He darted from the crowd and cried, "Oh, little Beppo, dost remember me? I am good Punchinello."

But here the circus folk protested. "Be

off! Be off! You bunch of rags!" cried they. "Our Punchinello was no beggar, and you are not he."

"I swear I am!" cried Punchinello. "Do you not know me, little Beppo?"

"When I was ill and could not walk," the child replied, "a clown called Punchinello cured me of my lameness by his merry songs and ways; but his face I know not. He came always in the night. When he danced, he danced so swiftly that a million harlequins there seemed to be about me: and when he held me in his arms, I hid my head against his shoulder, because I loved him dearly."

"Do you remember this, then, little one?" asked poor Punchinello, and showed the blue-bird locket, "the only treasure you did own, and which you gave to me?"

"I do, and you are my good Punchinello!" little Beppo cried, and flung his arms about him. He kissed the shabby creature and wrapped him in his own fine scarlet cloak to hide the rags. "How I have sought the world for you, dear Punchinello, to tell you of my gratitude; but I could never find you."

The circus folk went running and crowded round the pair. "Oh, welcome! Welcome, Punchinello!" they exclaimed and shook his hand. "A thousand welcomes. We have missed you sadly and now you will be our clown again."

"But little Beppo is your clown. What of him?" asked Punchinello.

"Oh, we shall both be clowns!" declared the child, "like father and like son. Together we shall dance those dances that you taught me and sing those songs with which you charmed the world."

And so this Punchinello found himself once more in satin robes of many colors, all jingling merrily with bells, and pom-pom slippers turned up at the toes. His face he whitened and then painted it in grotesque fashion, and with his little Beppo he danced that night and made his old-time capers and grimaces.

"Well done! Well done! Good Punchinello!" cried the people. "We have missed you sorely, but enjoy you all the more for missing you." They laughed and cheered him wildly until the show was done.

"And now," said Punchinello, as he laid him

down to rest that night, "I am the richest man in all the world. A thousand golden smiles were mine to-night, and better still I have the love and gratitude of little Beppo whom I dearly love. What more than that could Punchinello ask? And so good night!"

CHAPTER V

THE STRANGE TALE OF BROWN BEAR

Long, long ago, in the very far north, there lived a mammoth Brown Bear. Never in all the world was seen such a gigantic creature. Brown Bear was so tall his eyes looked over tops of trees, and his footprints were so deep that a grown man could stand full height in them. They were great pits.

Now Brown Bear owned a gold mine so rich that the king envied it. Also Brown Bear loved gold exceedingly, but as he had no hands he could not dig for it. Therefore he lay in wait for travelers journeying through the forest, and seizing them, he would carry them off to be his slaves and dig his gold. All folk suffered from this cruel custom, — the rich and poor, the high and low, the young and old. The king of that land offered rich rewards to the hunter who

would slay this monster or to the trapper who would snare him. But no arrow was made strong enough to pierce the hide of Brown Bear and no trap could hold him. So he continued to carry off all captured folk to his gold mine underneath the mountain side. 'T was said that Brown Bear had as many slaves as there were subjects left in the kingdom. 'T was also said, the walls of Brown Bear's cave were lined so thick with gold that they outshone the sun.

It happened one evening that a poor peasant returning to his hut missed his little child. His wife had lately died, and there was no one at home to tend the little one. He asked the neighbors of the child and learned that it had last been seen running toward the forest. In deep anxiety, the peasant hurried to the forest, but though he searched all night and called, he could not find his little one. When morning came at last and it was light, he saw the child's bright scarlet cloak beneath a tree and not far off the mighty footprints of Brown Bear.

"Alas!" the peasant wept, "my little one is carried off by this great monster. I do not wish to live!" He seized the little scarlet

cloak, and weeping and lamenting pressed it to his heart. Then when he could weep no more, he rose and began to follow in the path of Brown Bear's footprints.

"I 'll seek this Brown Bear in his cave," thought he, "and if he make a slave of me, I shall at least be with my little one, and if he kill me, I care not."

For many hours then the peasant toiled through brush and bramble, and when night came, from weariness he stumbled and fell headlong into one of the mighty footprints of Brown Bear. He broke no bones, but for a long time he knew nothing. When he awoke at last, he found beside him a tiny baby bear that wept and shivered with the cold.

"You, little one, are not yet wicked," said the peasant; "and though your race has done me injury, still if I warm and comfort you, so may some good soul warm and comfort my own little one whom I have lost."

He wrapped the baby bear all in the scarlet cloak and fed it bread. Then when it slept he took it in his arms and climbed out of the pit and set upon his way once more. He had not

gone far when he reached a cave all lined with gold, and this he knew to be the home of Brown Bear. Caring nothing for his life, the peasant boldly entered. When he was within, he saw the wife of Brown Bear weeping bitterly.

"Why come you here, O Peasant?" cried the wife of Brown Bear. "Do you not know that my husband makes slaves of all men? Hasten away before he returns lest he do you greater harm than even that."

"I care not if Brown Bear make a slave of me," the peasant answered. "Where is thy husband now, and why do you weep?"

"My husband, Brown Bear, is out seeking in the forest to find our little one, who wandered off and who, alas, I fear is dead. Therefore I do weep," she answered sobbingly, "and lest you know it not, O Peasant, let me tell you this; the loss of children is the greatest grief that ever parents suffer."

"Indeed! I know too well what grief is that!" the peasant cried, and bursting into tears, he told the tale of his own woes. Now as he told, the wife of Brown Bear fixed her great eyes on the bundle wrapped in scarlet that he carried.

"What have you there, O Peasant?" she asked eagerly.

"A tiny baby bear I found when I fell headlong into one of Brown Bear's footprints," he replied. "The little one did weep from cold and hunger, and so I fed and warmed him. And as I could not find it in my heart to let him die, I took him from the pit with me."

"It is my little one! It is my little one!" the wife of Brown Bear cried. She seized the baby bear and hugged and fondled it with joy. "But for your kind heart, Peasant, he must have died down in the pit; so wait you till my husband comes for your reward."

She raised her great voice in a mighty roar, and presently Brown Bear came crashing through the trees. He seized the baby bear and hugged it as his wife had done, and when he heard the story thanked the peasant warmly.

"Now for this service you have rendered me, I 'll give you all my gold, O Peasant," cried Brown Bear. "For though I do love gold beyond compare, I love my little one far more."

"And just as dearly do I love my little one whom you did steal, O Brown Bear," the peasant

cried. "And likewise do all parents love their little ones. Therefore if you will free all those you hold as slaves, ten thousand homes will be made happy as this home of yours to-night. I ask this boon, and you may keep your gold which you do love so dearly."

But Brown Bear would not have it so. "You shall have what you ask and all my gold beside," said he. "For while I mourned because my little one was lost, my gold brought me no gladness, but instead did mock me with its brightness." So saying, he flung open wide the door that led beneath the mountain side and bade his slaves go free. With shouts of joy these folk ran to their homes, and all the forest rang with their rejoicing. The peasant found his little one and held him to his heart.

"My little one! My little one!" he cried. "I wish no more reward than this, O Brown Bear."

"But you shall have more, even so," said Brown Bear, and gave to him the key of the gold mine. "Now you are richer than the king himself, and indeed, 't is right that you should be. For what his thousand hunters with their poi-

soned barbs and cruel traps could never do, with your kind heart you have accomplished, Peasant. Go tell the king and all his subjects that they need fear me nevermore. Through mine own grief I know the sorrows I have caused, and from henceforth I 'll live in peace with man."

The peasant thanked him and with his little one departed for his home, and there a multitude of grateful folk were gathered to greet him. And from that day the peasant was no longer poor. As owner of the rich gold mine, he now became a man of wealth. The king respected him and made him noble because he had done noble service for the kingdom. His title was Duke Kindlyheart.

In closing this strange tale, I too must say that Brown Bear kept his word and nevermore molested travelers journeying through the forest. Indeed, he grew so friendly with the king and court that he fought all their wars for them and brought them many victories. When Brown Bear died at last, as creatures all must do, the people wept for him, and all the kingdom put on mourning.

CHAPTER VI

THE BEGGAR PRINCESS

ONCE upon a time there lived a king who had great wealth and also many daughters, among whom he divided his kingdom before he died. That is, he gave lands and estates to all but his fourth daughter, the Princess Yvonne, who from her lack of fortune was forced to seek her living in the world. Having not a copper piece for her pocket and no gold save the gold of her hair, which, though it was very beautiful, nevertheless would not feed or clothe her, she was forced to beg her bread from door to door and became known as Yvonne, the Beggar Princess. And the reason of it all was this.

The king, being very wise, wished his daughters to wed none but princes from the most powerful thrones in the world. As soon as each daughter reached the age to marry, the king in-

vited to his court the suitors for her hand. The first and second daughters married the princes of their father's choice and went off to their palaces rejoicing, and so likewise did the third daughter. Because of their obedience, the king was pleased and gave them land and great riches for their marriage portions. He then turned his attention to find a husband for his fourth daughter, the Princess Yvonne, the fairest and most charming of them all.

Now all unknown to her father, Yvonne, loved Prince Godfrey of the Westland Kingdom. They had often met in the forest, and there they had vowed their love to one another. Prince Godfrey had wished to ask for the hand of Yvonne, but she, knowing her father's iron will, begged him to delay.

"My father is a stern king and rules his daughters in all things," said the princess. "He would part us forever should it come to him that we had dared to do aught without his consent. Return, I pray you, to your kingdom and there await my father's summons, for I have heard him say that you would be bidden to his court as suitor for my hand."

Prince Godfrey, much against his will, consented to do as Yvonne asked. He kissed her farewell and departed that very evening for the Westland Kingdom. What befell him on the homeward journey, Princess Yvonne never knew, but she saw him no more. She carried his image in her heart and could love no other prince, though her father sent far and near for suitors to please her. Knowing nothing of her love for Prince Godfrey, at last the king placed her refusals to a stubborn spirit.

"My daughter, Yvonne," said he, after she had refused five princes in as many days, "how do you know whom you love or whom you love not? You, my fourth daughter, cannot pretend to know as much as I, your father. Where have you been to learn of this nonsense that you call love?"

To which the princess made reply: "That I cannot tell, my father, except that my heart bids me marry only the prince whom I shall love well, and of these princes you have brought hither I love none at all. I pray you now, turn your attention to the affairs of my younger sisters, who are anxious to wed, and leave me for

a little longer in peace." She was so gentle in her speech and so winning in her manner that the king forgot his vexation and busied himself with seeking suitors for his younger daughters.

They married according to his wishes and pleased him exceedingly. With each marriage, the king gave portions of his kingdom, until at length there remained but two estates, and of his nine daughters there were but two unmarried. Again he sent for the Princess Yvonne, and this time he spoke sharply to her.

"Now, Yvonne, my fourth daughter, I have listened to your entreaties and given you your will in all things, and still you are not wed. I cannot compel you to marry if you do not wish to please me; but this I tell you. To-morrow there comes to this castle a prince who has both gold and lands, and who moreover is handsome and possessed of a sweet temper. If you wed not him, I will give the remainder of my kingdom to your youngest sister. Then you will be left portionless, and what disgrace that will be! A princess without a fortune is a sad creature, and I advise you to try my patience no longer."

Yvonne listened with tears in her eyes. She dearly loved her father and wished to please him, but her heart still treasured the image of the absent Godfrey.

The following day, at her father's commands, she dressed herself in her finest robes and bound her hair with the royal jewels. Thus attired, she went forth to the throne room to greet the suitor who awaited her. The king was well pleased with her appearance and smiled encouragement to her, but alas for his hopes! The Princess Yvonne burst into tears before the court, thereby offending the suitor and bringing down her father's wrath. He bade the weeping Yvonne withdraw and commanded his youngest daughter to appear in her place. So agreeable was this youngest daughter that the prince forgot his anger and fell in love with her before a single day had passed. They were married with great splendor and the king, as he had declared, gave them the remainder of his kingdom as a wedding gift.

Thus it was that the Princess Yvonne went forth from her father's castle without his blessing, without a fortune, without even a copper

piece for her pocket, and without riches of any sort save the bright yellow gold of her hair. She had been raised in a castle and therefore knew not how to spin or to weave or even to embroider, which three occupations were considered suitable for young serving women in that day, so she was forced to beg her bread from door to door; hence her title, Yvonne, the Beggar Princess.

She left her father's kingdom and by and by found service at a farm. The people were very poor, and she did the work of three, but they treated her kindly, and Yvonne worked cheerfully. Early in the morning she drew water from the well, and many a ewer she had carried to the kitchen before the sun rose. She served the table for the plowmen and took her own meal in the pantry while she tidied up after they had gone to the fields. All day long she baked and brewed, or scoured pots and pans until they shone like silver. In spite of her changed fortunes, the princess remained as sweet-tempered as in the days when she lived in her father's castle and had naught to vex her from morning until night. If the butter would not churn,

she would sing instead of scolding as the other maids did, and presently the butter would come, and such butter as it was too! When the loaves burned, she did not cry out against the Brownies, who were said to play tricks with the oven, but received the scolding from her mistress with humility. At night, no matter how weary she might be from her long day, the princess went willingly to fetch the cattle, for the walk through the fields and forest cheered her.

It was in the forest she had first met Godfrey, and it was in the forest he had vowed to love her always. So as she sang her shepherd's song and called softly to the straying herds, she was with her absent prince in memory.

"He will come for me by and by," she would whisper to herself sometimes, when she waked suddenly from a dream in which Godfrey had seemed very near. Other times she would be frightened lest perhaps he might some day pass her on the highway. "In my peasant's dress, there is but little to remind him of the princess whom he bade farewell in my father's hunting forest," she would say. She had no mirror and quite forgot her lovely face and

her golden hair, which a queen might well have envied.

One evening in autumn, when the night falls early and the darkness creeps on swiftly, the princess wandered through the forest in search of the cattle. She was tired, but as she walked among the trees she grew rested, and presently she began to sing. In the open spaces she called softly, but no creatures came to follow her. The wind sighed through the pines, and once she started, thinking she heard some one call her name. She stood quite still and listened, but the wind died away and the forest was silent. She wandered farther, and the trees grew more dense. There was no moon to guide her, and after a time, the princess perceived she had lost her way.

"For myself, it does not matter," said she, "I can find shelter in the hollow of some tree and there be very comfortable until morning." Never before had the cattle strayed so far but that at the sound of her voice they would come slowly down the paths and crashing through the brush. They followed her like pets. She resolved to call them once more and began to sing:

"Oh, tell me, shepherds, have you ever heard,
A wee white lamb that cries at eve —"

but she broke off her song and caught her breath sharply. An old mill stood before her in the spot where a great oak had spread its branches when she began her song! The mill sails turned and creaked in the forest breeze, but there was not a sound of life about the place. There were no doors, and though the princess walked all around the walls, she found no opening save a sort of window heavily barred and crossbarred. On the top of the walls glistened jagged lumps of glass.

"It looks more like a prison than a mill," thought she, and then as she peered into the opening, a voice from the dungeon beneath began to sing. Yvonne's heart leaped for joy; it was the voice of Godfrey, her beloved!

"Yvonne, Yvonne, my heart has ached with longing
Since I bade you farewell in the forest.
Each night my spirit has stolen forth
To kiss you in your dreams
Lest you forget me, because I came not.
A cruel king has stolen my throne and enslaved my land,

And until he is driven from it,
I must remain in this dungeon, bound by his evil spell.
Oh, Yvonne, fly to your father,
Beg him send an army to help my people,
For they suffer greatly and I am powerless.
But before all, Yvonne, unbind your golden hair
That its brightness may shine within these prison walls,
And sing to me that your heart is still mine."

The princess unbound her hair, and in the forest about the mill all became bright as day. Then through her tears she sang of her life, for she was deeply grieved to find Godfrey in such a plight.

"To think that I who love you should be the cause of all your woes!" cried Godfrey, when he had heard her story. "Return to your father, Yvonne. Tell him that you will wed whom he wishes and forget me, for I have brought you naught but tears and sorrows."

"Ah, my beloved," replied the princess, "though I cannot see you and you be but a voice, you are the voice of one who loves me, and that to me is dearer than all the world. I cannot return to my father, for now he is dead, and

my sisters have cast me off because I was portionless; but I myself shall seek this cruel king and beg him to set you free."

"Seek this cruel King Ironheart!" exclaimed Godfrey in dismay. "Surely, Yvonne, you know not what you say, for never in all the world before was known such a tyrant! Men he casts into prison, nor does he ever release them, but condemns them to dig beneath the earth that he may fill his treasury with gold; women must toil all day in the fields and for a few coppers; while their children die of hunger, this King Ironheart has granaries filled full of good grains. King Ironheart has vast armies, each soldier of which is as cruel as his master, and were you to go to the Westland Kingdom, these same soldiers would seek you out and enslave you with the rest of my people. You must not go, Yvonne; as you love me, promise me that you will not."

"The more you tell me of the sorrows of the Westland Kingdom, the more I am resolved to seek this cruel Ironheart. If I fail, I fail, but what is my life to me unless you be set free, Godfrey?"

"But, Yvonne," pleaded Godfrey from his dungeon, "think of my suffering, should you do this for my sake. What powerful weapon have you to use against this wicked Ironheart?"

"None but courage and a good heart," replied the princess. "In the past they have worked miracles, and so may they work miracles now. Deny me no more, Godfrey, but tell me the way to your kingdom, that I may all the sooner return to free you, for I will not fail."

No words could move her, and at last Godfrey gave her her will.

"Dress your feet in the slippers of bark which you will find beneath a pine tree close to the mill. They will serve you for your travels until you return again to this forest," said he. "Then watch closely in the east, and when the sun rises, start at once to follow him as he journeys across the sky, neither stopping nor staying, and at sunset you will find yourself on the borders of the Westland Kingdom. Should you grow weary or should your courage fail you, Yvonne, sing, and my spirit will fly to cheer you."

So with the coming of the dawn, Yvonne bound her golden hair and dressed her feet in

the slippers of bark. She looked toward the east for the first beam of the sun, and when she turned once more to the mill it had disappeared. In its place stood a great oak with green grass smooth as a carpet growing beneath it. But Yvonne had no time to marvel at this new wonder, for the sun rose from the clouds and straightway began its journey above the world. All day long Yvonne followed after, now wading shallow mountain brooks, now fording rivers wide as any sea. Now she walked through cool green forests and again over hot, sandy desert plains. She grew weary and longed to rest, but remembering Godfrey's words, she sang instead. And so it was at sunset she found herself upon the borders of the Westland Kingdom, and too weary for aught else, she begged shelter of a peasant woman and slept soundly until morning.

The Westland Kingdom, in the days of Prince Godfrey, had been the pleasantest place in all the world, but now there was not a sadder spot on earth. From his desert throne, King Ironheart had long coveted its great forests and fertile fields, its rich mines of silver and gold

beneath the earth. He had not dared meet Prince Godfrey in open battle, for Godfrey was a fierce warrior and his nobles were brave soldiers. So it was secretly and in the dead of night, when Prince Godfrey was away from his land on a journey, that King Ironheart entered the Westland Kingdom and conquered it by force of arms. At the same time he caused Godfrey to be imprisoned in the mill which sank beneath the forest by day. Then having done thus much, he offered riches and high honors to all Westland subjects who would swear allegiance to him as their sovereign lord. The people with one accord refused to listen to his ministers and remained faithful to Godfrey.

King Ironheart was furious, but he gave them seven days in which to change their minds. At the end of the seventh day, he called a council of the Westland people and was gracious in his bearing toward them; but from the highest noble to the lowest peasant, there was not one in all the kingdom who would bow the knee to King Ironheart. From that day, the reign of cruelty began. King Ironheart bade his army drive the men to the mines beneath the earth,

and when this was done, he rewarded his generals and soldiers with the palaces and houses of the Westland people. Driven thus from their homes, there was nothing left for the women and children but to seek shelter where they could find it. Some lived in wretched huts; others toiled at cutting logs to build rude cabins, and all were forced to work like slaves. King Ironheart meant to punish the Westland Kingdom and spared no one.

Though the castle of this cruel king lay but a short distance from the entrance of the Westland Kingdom, the road that stretched between was filled with such sadness and sorrow that it was many a day before the princess stood at its gates. Little children struggled with heavy burdens, and when she had helped these, other little children with heavy burdens passed sadly down the same road. Women toiled unceasingly in the forest or drove the plow from dawn until dark; King Ironheart's soldiers saw to it that none idled. Yvonne had no coins to buy bread, and again she was forced to beg from door to door, but so willingly did she help those who labored that the sad-faced women

were glad to share with her their scant store. A Westland woman, noting the slippers of bark, asked her who she might be and from whence she came; to which the princess made the following reply:

"In my country I am called Yvonne, the Beggar Princess. My father cast me off portionless because I would not wed to please him; and I seek the tyrant Ironheart, to beg him quit the Westland Kingdom and to free from his dungeon Prince Godfrey, whom I love with all my heart."

When the Westland women heard her reply, they marveled at her courage, but shook their heads and advised her to give up her quest.

"You seek to move with pity one whose heart is cold as his name would say!" they cried. "King Ironheart laughs at mothers' tears and takes pleasure in the wails of hungry children; return to your home, Oh Yvonne, or this wicked king will enslave you with this sad land."

"That I will not do," replied the princess firmly. "With courage and a good heart, I have come hither to beg mercy of King Ironheart. If I fail, I fail, and here in bondage I

shall remain with you who mourn Prince Godfrey, for he is lord of my heart."

The princess delayed her errand no longer, but rose with the dawn the following day and was waiting early at the castle gates. On being questioned by the soldiers, she said she had come to seek King Ironheart. They asked who she was, and she answered them truthfully that she was Yvonne, the Beggar Princess.

"A Beggar Princess!" exclaimed the soldiers in derision. "Who ever before heard of a princess without gold?"

"This gold I have about me," replied the princess, and she unbound her golden hair. In the morning sun it shone brilliantly and dazzled the eyes of King Ironheart, who leaned from his balcony to learn the cause of the sudden bright light. He saw the princess standing at the gate and commanded that she be brought before him.

As she entered the throne room, though she had not feared her father's wrath and was not afraid to walk alone at midnight in the forest, the princess was seized with a sudden fear that left her almost speechless. It was not that King Ironheart was hideous as monsters are

often hideous, nor was he misshapen; but beneath his smile there lurked such cruelty and malice that she feared her cause was lost before she had begun to plead it. The thought of Godfrey lying in his dungeon stirred her, and she asked leave of his majesty to sing. King Ironheart was pleased with her request and graciously ordered his chief harpist to play the airs for Yvonne. At the end of the entertainment, the king's servants brought handsome robes and gifts of gold for the singer whom the king mistook for some peasant maiden.

The princess refused his gifts with dignity.

"My lord," said she, "I may not receive gifts from you, for my rank is equal to your own. I am Yvonne, the Beggar Princess."

"Then so much the better," replied the king in a hearty tone. "I have long wished for a princess whom my heart could love, and who would not fall a-trembling at the very sight of me. We shall be married at once, and I will make war on your sisters this very day, to recover the marriage portion which is yours by all rights." He sent then for the coronation robes and the crown of pearls, but again the princess

waved away the bearer of his gifts. With her singing, courage had returned, and she now faced the tyrant king bravely.

"My lord," said she, "I have come hither not to wed you, but to beg you to leave the Westland Kingdom, for the people suffer greatly because of your harsh rule; and to implore you to free from his dungeon Prince Godfrey, whom I love with all my heart."

King Ironheart was amazed that she should dare to oppose his wishes, but secretly he admired her courage and fearless spirit and determined to win her for himself. He promised her great riches and vowed to make her the most powerful queen in all the world, but Yvonne was firm. When he saw it was useless to urge her, King Ironheart grew angry.

"And what powerful weapon or armed force do you bring against me that I should thus do your bidding, O Yvonne, Beggar Princess?" he asked at length in sneering tones.

"None but courage and a good heart, my lord, and those can work miracles," replied the princess.

"Then," said King Ironheart, "if by miracles

you hope to accomplish your quest, perform to my liking the task I now set for you, and when it is finished I shall leave this kingdom and free Godfrey from his dungeon."

He called a servant and directed him to bring from the pantry a handful of corn, and when it was brought he gave it to the princess.

"When it is spring, plant these kernels, and in harvest time, if from your planting I do not gather corn to fill to the overflowing every granary in the Westland Kingdom, I will enslave you with the rest of this land, and Prince Godfrey shall remain in his dungeon until death come to free him. Now go," commanded King Ironheart, "and return no more until your task be done."

The women who awaited the princess in the market place sighed when they learned the task King Ironheart had set. From one scant handful of corn to fill every granary in the Westland Kingdom! It was impossible. Even Yvonne found it hard to keep a good heart with the thought of the task before her. If she failed, Prince Godfrey would remain forever in his dungeon, and yet from one handful of

corn how should she reap a harvest for a nation?

She tied the corn in a kerchief and carried it next her heart lest some of the precious grains should slip away. Each night she counted them, and each night she rejoiced to find she had still one hundred, the exact number King Ironheart had given her. From her work at the farm, the princess knew well the labor of the fields and dairy, so she toiled the winter through with the other women. One evening, as she sat in the moonlight counting her precious grains, she heard voices near by, but a hedge hid the speakers.

"Ah," said the first voice sadly, "that one hundred provinces, the fairest this side of Paradise, should be so crushed beneath this cruel King Ironheart! I would that he were driven away, and that the good Prince Godfrey would return to his own once again."

"Have patience," answered a second voice which was exceedingly sweet and gentle. "Know that for the space of the winter months the Princess Yvonne hath carried next her heart one hundred grains of corn from which the

cruel Ironheart hath commanded her to reap a harvest for the nation. Now such is the power of a good heart that when she hath planted these grains, there will spring from them such a harvest as never before was gathered in any country. Then, according to his promise, King Ironheart will free Prince Godfrey and quit the Westland Kingdom forever."

The voices ceased suddenly as they had begun, but on looking over the hedge, the princess could see no one. She treasured the words she had heard, and with a song in her heart, waited until the winter should be gone. When spring was come at last, she traveled with it through the Westland Kingdom and planted a single grain in the center of each province, until her kerchief was empty. It seemed that the land itself was weary of the cruel Ironheart and longed once more for peace and happiness, for such a supply of corn was never known in the Westland Kingdom. In autumn, when it was gathered into the granaries, there was more than they could hold, and the king's servants built storehouses to contain the surplus. Then the princess went to King Ironheart to tell him

that her task was done. He had heard of the wonder from his ministers and had waiting for her another task. The first he now declared had been but child's play, and he vowed to free Prince Godfrey when she should accomplish the second.

"But, my lord, how can I believe you?" cried the princess in dismay. "Even should I accomplish the second task, when it is done will you not set for me another and another, and so on until the end of time?"

"Never fear, Yvonne, Beggar Princess," replied King Ironheart with his cruel smile. "This time I will keep my word right gladly. Though I set Godfrey free a thousand times, he will never marry you, for should you accomplish this second task, you will be the ugliest woman in all the world. Think twice before you set about it," he warned. "If you fail, you will be enslaved for the rest of your life; and if you succeed, you will be hideous.

"Now you had best marry me and give up this silly thing you call true love. It hath brought you naught but tears and sorrow in the past and will bring you no better in the future."

He smiled and looked graciously at Yvonne, but she was unmoved.

"Because I loved Prince Godfrey, I defied my father and became the Beggar Princess, Yvonne," she answered scornfully, "and because I loved Prince Godfrey, I came to his land to beg his freedom of you who hold him in cruel captivity. How then should I wed you? Tell me what it is that you would have me do; I care not whether I return from my task the ugliest woman in all the world!"

"Then listen well to what I say," replied the king, "for I shall not tell you twice. My kingdom, which lies just beyond the borders of the Westland Kingdom, is naught but a great desert plain. There are on this plain neither rivers nor springs, but instead the wind blows the sand in clouds above it all day long, and nothing will grow in such a place.

"Seek this plain, and when you have found it, cause springs and rivers to water it, the better to nourish a forest which you must plant there to please me. In the heart of this forest build for me a splendid palace, the outer walls of whitest marble and the inner walls of purest

gold. Thousands of red roses must climb to the towers of the palace. When you have done thus much, trouble not yourself to furnish it for me, but return to me, and I promise that I shall betake myself and my court to my own kingdom and quit this land forever and ever. I am weary of a people who smile never but weep from sun to sun for their absent lord."

"But Prince Godfrey; what of him?" asked the princess.

"Ah," laughed King Ironheart, "I shall tell you also the secret charm that will cause his chains to fall from him and his dungeon doors to open wide." He bade the princess farewell, and his smile was more cruel than she had yet seen it. Nevertheless she departed from his presence full of courage.

The women were again waiting her in the market place, and when they heard the second task, they despaired of seeing again their rightful lord and sadly resigned themselves to their fate. They followed the princess to the gates of the kingdom, and as she was about to depart, an old wise woman gave her a bag, saying:

"Within this bag are pine cones and acorns

of marvelous power. When you have caused the first springs to water the desert plain, at nightfall dip these into the waters, plant them and by morning a forest of oak and pine will spring from them."

The princess took the bag and thanked the wise woman. Strange to say, she was hopeful about her task.

"Who can tell?" thought she. "One task that seemed at first impossible I have already finished." So she sang cheerfully as she went her way. In her mind she pictured the delight and joy of Prince Godfrey when she should go again to the mill in the forest to tell him that he was free. For three days and three nights she traveled, and on the morning of the fourth day she reached the great desert plain. It was even more desolate than King Ironheart had said. Great stretches of burning hot sands spread far and wide, and the sky, where it bent down at the horizon, seemed copper-colored. The blazing sun beat fiercely over all, and there was neither bush nor tree for shade. When the sun set, darkness came swiftly and without the gray softening shades of twilight.

The princess sat sadly and watched the stars come out. In the deep blue sky above the desert they shone like gold.

"Their happy gleaming seems to mock the heart of one as sad as I," sighed she. Now that she was upon the desert plain she wondered how or where she was to begin King Ironheart's task.

"The gleaming stars mock no one," said a voice close beside her, "but instead they shine brightly to cheer all those who sorrow."

The princess turned to see the speaker, but she was alone on the plain.

"I am the Spirit you heard by the hedge one moonlight night," spoke the voice again. "Do you remember?"

"I remember well," replied Yvonne, "and oh, Spirit, had the cruel Ironheart kept his promise, Godfrey would even now be free of his dungeon; but alas! The wicked king hath set me still another task."

"It is to help you with that task that I have come," said the Spirit. "Each night when the stars begin to shine in the heavens, expect me, until your task be done; and now to begin as

the king commanded, I must have the blue from your eyes to make the rivers and lakes."

"The blue from my eyes!" cried the princess in dismay. "Truly the cruel Ironheart hath said it rightly. I shall be the ugliest woman alive! But it is to free my beloved Godfrey, so take it, Spirit!" She felt a movement of the air close beside her and an invisible hand was drawn across her eyelids. At the same moment she heard the singing of a brook near by and in the distance the roaring of a waterfall.

Remembering the wise woman's advice, Yvonne dipped the acorns and pine cones in the brook and planted them in the desert sand before she slept. In the morning she awoke in a wilderness of forest, and the plain, no longer barren and desolate, was alive with birds that sang, and wild deer that ran among the trees. The princess sought the heart of this forest, and there when night had come she awaited the Spirit. When the stars began to shine, it came as it had promised.

"The outer walls of the palace must be of whitest marble," said the Spirit, "and for that I must have the whiteness of your neck and

throat." Though the princess shuddered, she consented, and the invisible hand was passed over her neck and throat. No sooner had it done so than in the open space among the trees she could see the outlines of a great building whose walls gleamed in the moonlight.

"And now," continued the Spirit, "if you have no wish to wander through this forest of oak and pine, but long instead to have done with your task, give me at once the gold of your hair and the red from your lips, that I may finish the inner walls of the palace and cause thousands of red roses to climb to the towers."

"The sooner I finish my task, the sooner will King Ironheart free Godfrey from his dungeon," replied the princess. "While he lies in chains, the red of my lips and the gold of my hair bring me no pleasure ; so take them quickly, Spirit." The same hand was passed over her hair and her lips and the Spirit spoke again.

"Now look at the palace to see that it is all King Ironheart desired," it said. "Then when you are satisfied we shall start at once to tell him that your task is done. I shall remain

with you to cheer you until you go again to the mill in the forest."

Yvonne did as the Spirit bid. She found the palace of great splendor, and myriads of red roses blossomed over its white marble walls. Within all was bright as day; the golden walls glittered like a thousand suns.

"Even the tyrant Ironheart could ask no more," said she. "Lead the way, Spirit, and I shall tell him that I have finished my task."

Traveling by a short road known only to the Spirit, the princess reached the Westland Kingdom the next day, and was on her way to the castle when the women went down to the fields to work. They regarded Yvonne as one they had never seen before, and she was puzzled for the reason.

"Alas!" cried the Spirit sadly. "You are fair of face no longer, Yvonne. They do not know that they have ever seen you before." Then straight past the guards and into the presence of King Ironheart the Spirit led her.

King Ironheart cried out in fury as the princess entered the throne room. "Old crone!" he exclaimed. "How dare you to come into my

presence? Do you not know I cannot abide old age or ugliness? You shall be punished."

"Old age," echoed the princess. "I am not old. I am Yvonne, the Beggar Princess, whom you bid turn the desert plain into a wilderness of forest and build therein a splendid palace for you."

Then the cruel king laughed heartily. "Never," cried he, "have I been so diverted. Go at once to the mill in the forest where the sun rises, O Yvonne, Beggar Princess, and at the very sight of you the walls will fall. Tell Prince Godfrey that I have departed his land and have betaken myself and soldiers to the splendid palace which you so kindly built for me. However, let me first reward you with this gift." Before the princess was aware, he had flashed a mirror before her face.

Yvonne gazed spell-bound as she beheld her changed image.

"Oh!" cried she, "you are more cruel than I had even supposed. But for you I had never known how hideous I have become. Truly I am the ugliest woman in all the world!" She wept and covered her face that she might look

no more in the mirror which King Ironheart continued to hold before her gaze. The Spirit, with pitying words, led her from the castle and tried to comfort her; but at the sight of her changed image, Yvonne's courage had fled. Even when the glad shouts of the Westland people told her that Ironheart was departing the kingdom, she did not smile. She wept all the way as she journeyed sadly to the forest where the sun rose. She now longed only to free Godfrey and then to die.

"For," thought she, "though he be gallant enough to wed me in pity for my hideous countenance, I love him too dearly, and I could not bear that all the world should look with loathing on his queen."

Late one night the princess entered the forest where she had gone so often to seek the herds, and at midnight she stood before the mill. It was dark and dreary looking as ever, and no sign nor sound of life could be seen about it. Standing close to the window-like opening she began to sing:

"Prince Godfrey, my beloved,
I have come to set you free.

The wicked Ironheart hath at last departed your land
And the Westland people await your return with all joy."

She heard his voice from the dungeon beneath and listened eagerly for his reply.

"Oh, Yvonne," cried Prince Godfrey, "your voice is sad when it should be glad. For even now my chains have fallen from me and I am hastening to the door of my prison unhindered." The mill sank into the ground, and Yvonne trembled with joy as she saw Prince Godfrey coming toward her. He passed her without a glance and then returned to ask eagerly:

"Old crone, hast seen aught of a beautiful princess who sang from this spot not a moment since?"

Yvonne, seeing that he knew her not, pointed silently down a path, and away sped Godfrey. Then away sped Yvonne down another path and ran until she found a hollow tree. There she crept in and laid her down to sleep. "Though Godfrey search the whole night, he can never find me here," said Yvonne to herself. "Then in the morning I shall go to the

farmer's wife and herd cows once again. None will be there to mock my ugly features, and since my beloved prince is freed at last, I am content." But though she spoke so to herself, it would seem otherwise, for Yvonne wept bitterly until at last she fell fast asleep.

Meanwhile Prince Godfrey shouted her name and searched the forest in vain. At last he sat to rest and a voice beside him spoke.

"You seek Yvonne, the Beggar Princess," said the voice. "I can take you to her if you so wish."

"But I see no one!" cried Godfrey in amazement. "Who is it that knows my secret thoughts thus?"

"I am the Spirit with which Yvonne set out to rid your land of the tyrant Ironheart, and with which she gave her beauty that you might be freed of your prison. The old crone whom you passed in this forest was none other than Yvonne." Then the Spirit recounted the tale of the trials and sufferings that Yvonne had borne. Godfrey listened with dismay.

"And now," concluded the Spirit, "fearing that you would feel bound to wed her in spite

of her changed face and hideous features, Yvonne has hidden herself in the hollow of a tree not far from this spot. Shall I lead you thither, Godfrey, or will you journey to the Westland Kingdom alone?"

"Ah, Spirit!" cried Godfrey sadly, "I would have died within my dungeon rather than gain my freedom at such price. However, what is done is done, and no regret or vain repining may undo it. So lead me quickly, Spirit, that I may tell Yvonne how I do honor and love her for her noble heart and courage."

Now the Spirit was pleased that Godfrey should speak so. Then, because it was a good spirit, and had no wish to see folk sad or unhappy, it resolved that these two mortals had suffered trials sufficient. So while the Spirit guided Godfrey through the shadowy aisles of dusky cedars, it caused the earth to tremble mightily three times. Great crashes like those of thunder accompanied each tremor; Yvonne fled frightened from her hiding place and found herself face to face with Godfrey. At the sight of his beloved one, Godfrey knew no fears and cried out in delight and joy.

"Oh, Yvonne! The Spirit did but try me," he exclaimed. "Thou art thrice as lovely as the dawn itself which now appears in yonder sky!"

But Yvonne would not heed his words, and covered her face with her hands. Weeping and lamenting, she begged him to leave her. "Pray do not mock me, Godfrey," she cried, "I cannot bear that you should see my face. Indeed I am become the ugliest woman in all the world. Let me go, as you love me. But for my fright at the violent trembling of the earth I had remained safe hidden until you had departed for the Westland Kingdom."

"Then but for the violent trembling of the earth, I had lost you forever!" cried Godfrey. "So I bless the one who sent the earthquake."

"Then you bless me and I am free at last to fly to paradise," said the Spirit. "I caused the earth to tremble. I wished the tyrant Ironheart to cumber it no more. At the first tremor, in the forest of oak and pine, the ground opened wide in a great chasm. At the second tremor, the forest as well as the palace of King Ironheart were swallowed up in this great

chasm. At the third tremor, the chasm closed itself and there now is nothing in that spot but a hot arid desert plain where the wind blows the sands about in clouds the whole day long."

"Then King Ironheart is no more?" asked Prince Godfrey.

"King Ironheart and all his wicked followers lie deep beneath this arid desert plain of which I tell," declared the Spirit. "And now, Yvonne, to set your mind at rest gaze into the pool at your feet."

Yvonne gazed downward and there beheld an image, so beautiful that she turned to see the fair maiden whom she fancied had peeped over her shoulder. The image of Godfrey smiling beside her assured her at last that it was her own face she saw, and Yvonne's joy knew no bounds.

"Oh, Spirit!" she cried. "You have done many kind things for me, but this gift of beauty thou hast given me surpasses all! I am the happiest woman alive, for now I know I am worthy to be Godfrey's queen."

"I did but give you what was yours, Yvonne,"

returned the Spirit, "and now farewell, for soon the sun will rise and I am off to paradise."

"But, Spirit, will you not come with us to the Westland Kingdom?" begged Yvonne. "What shall we do without you to help us with our trials? Pray stay."

"Nay, Yvonne," replied the Spirit. "Continue in the way you have begun; remember always, courage and a good heart can work miracles and there will be no need of me. Farewell!"

"Farewell, farewell, Spirit!" called Godfrey and Yvonne together. Then as the sun rose from the clouds they heard an answering echo of farewell. So singing for joy, hand in hand, Prince Godfrey and Yvonne the Beggar Princess followed the sun on his journey to the Westland Kingdom, where they lived forever after, and where to this very day 't is said by some that their descendants reign.

CHAPTER VII

SWEEP AND LITTLE SWEEP

I

ONCE upon a time, in days long ago, there lived a Chimney Sweep and a little Crossing Sweeper. This Chimney Sweep was called "Sweep." He had a very black face, from the soot he swept down tall chimneys, but he had a kind heart and dearly loved this little Crossing Sweeper, whose name was Little Sweep. Little Sweep had a grimy, gray face from the ashes she threw on her muddy crossings, and as for her heart, — I suppose it was kind. Sweep thought it kind, and Little Sweep vowed she loved Sweep tenderly.

Now Sweep was his own master and owned a smart little donkey cart, all filled with brooms and brushes; but Little Sweep had a dreadful master, who beat her often and gave her scarcely

enough to eat. Sweep lived in a snug little garret, and Little Sweep lived in a cold bare attic just across the way. The street was so narrow that the two could chat quite easily with one another. On holidays, when Sweep, so black and sooty, and Little Sweep, so gray and grimy, rode forth in the smart little donkey cart, the people all stared and vowed it was seldom one could see a couple so well matched.

Every morning Little Sweep was out with her broom, before the sun was up. Her master would beat her if she dared lie late abed. Now Sweep had no need to rise so early. His trade of sweeping down tall chimneys did not begin until later in the day. Nevertheless this amiable fellow bought himself a clock with a loud ringing bell, and when this clock rang out at five each morning, he would throw bread and buns to Little Sweep just over the way. Little Sweep would eat the bread and buns most eagerly, for she was always very hungry. Sweep bought her red mittens to warm her poor hands, and wept when he learned that her cruel master had taken them from her and sold them.

"Ah, Little Sweep," he would say, "when my golden dollars fill the stocking, we shall be married, and you will sweep crossings no longer. Instead, you will sit at home in a neat little cottage and brew me soups and make strong soaps to wash my black face. Then on holidays we shall both ride forth, all clean and shining."

"Oh, please hurry then, and sweep ever so many chimneys, that the stocking may very soon fill with golden dollars!" Little Sweep would reply. "My master grows crosser every day, and I cannot bear my life."

"But you forget me," answered Sweep. "Is not my garret window just across from yours, and do I not throw you bread and buns each day?"

"Indeed, if it were not for your bread and buns, I know that I would die," declared Little Sweep. "My master does not give me food enough to feed a robin."

"And I would buy you more bread and buns," sighed Sweep, "except that bread and buns cost pennies, and if I spend too many pennies, the stocking will never fill with golden dollars."

Now in those olden days, as no doubt you

know, kings and queens and noble folk stored all their gold in great carved chests of oak and walnut; but humble folk like Sweep hid their savings in a stocking.

One day when Sweep swept down the chimneys of a rich baker, the rich baker gave him seven tarts and a plum cake, for a present. You may be sure that Little Sweep enjoyed a feast that night. Her cruel master had gone off for the day and had locked her in her room with only bread and water. When Sweep learned that, his kindly heart was touched; he gave Little Sweep the whole plum cake and kept but one tart for himself. That was the manner of man Sweep was. Everything for Little Sweep and nothing for himself. When he swept tall chimneys in the shops of merchants, Sweep would buy some bits of linen or some ends of lace for Little Sweep. These Little Sweep would fashion into curtains and tidies for the little cottage of their dreams.

Now it is a curious thing to tell, but nevertheless quite true, that though Sweep's stocking filled at last, and there were even two golden dollars more than it could hold, still Little

Sweep lived in her cold bare attic. And still her master beat her. The reason of it all was this. Sweep and Little Sweep could not agree upon a cottage. Sweep wished a cottage with many chimneys, in order that he might work at his trade. Little Sweep, on the other hand, who hated ashes and everything to do with chimneys, wished for a house with all glass doors and windows and no chimneys at all! Plainly the cottage to suit these two could not be found. Then Sweep decided on a sage plan.

"Now do you be content with a house of fewer glass doors and windows, Little Sweep," said he, "and likewise I shall content myself with fewer chimneys." So again they set out, and this time soon found a cottage to please them. Little Sweep swept the crossings before it; Sweep swept down the chimneys. Then at the doors and windows Little Sweep hung up the curtains she had made, and pinned the tidies to the backs of the chairs. Sweep bought a ham and a bacon, and likewise a loaf of white bread, and behold, they were ready to be married!

Sweep was very happy because his darling

"Hide me, Little Sweep," cried Red Cap.
"My brother is after me."—*Page* 175.

would sweep no crossings, and neither would her cruel master beat her any more. Little Sweep rejoiced because she did not like her trade; she was sure that she would never again be hungry, for Sweep would buy her all the bread and buns she could desire. Sweep took the two extra golden dollars and spent them both on finery for Little Sweep. He bought her a little gray wedding frock (to match her grimy, gray face, you know), some blue cotton stockings, and a red ribbon for her hair. For himself he bought only a gay green feather to wear in his hat and a bottle of oil to polish his holiday shoes. Always, you will notice, he gave everything to Little Sweep.

Then the day before their wedding day, some very strange things came to pass. Little Sweep was standing at her crossing when a tiny little man, dressed out in green and wearing a bright red cap, flew through the air and perched upon her broomstick.

"Hide me, Little Sweep," cried Red Cap. "My brother is after me."

"Hide in my pocket," replied Little Sweep, and no sooner had the first Red Cap crawled

into her pocket than a second little creature, larger than the first, flew through the air and perched upon her broomstick.

"Tell me, Little Sweep," cried the second little creature angrily, "have you seen my brother flying north or east or south or west?"

Now as Little Sweep had heard that Red Caps often did great things for those who befriended them, she stood silent.

"Stupid!" cried the second little creature, when she did not speak. Then off he flew as suddenly as he had appeared, and out from Little Sweep's pocket crawled the first Red Cap.

"Ugh!" exclaimed Red Cap, brushing his tiny beard and dusting his green satin suit. "How comes it that your pocket is so very dusty?"

"I must keep ashes in it for my trade of sweeping crossings," replied Little Sweep. "I hate it."

"Then perhaps I might find you a better trade," said Red Cap, gazing thoughtfully at Little Sweep's gray grimy face and raggedy garments. "We Red Caps, although we be very little folk, be very powerful folk, you know."

"Yes, I have heard that you grant wishes to

poor folk sometimes," replied Little Sweep; "is that true?"

"It is," said Red Cap, nodding gravely. "Make three wishes now, and I will grant them for you."

Now fairy lore is filled with tales of folk who had three wishes given them, and, as you have perhaps remarked, these folk have often wished too hastily and consequently wished unwisely. The old woman who wished for black puddings is one, and the man who wished his mill to always grind salt is another. And there are scores and scores of these unwise folk that I could name. But Little Sweep was not like one of these. She leaned upon her broom and paused some time in deepest thought. At last she spoke.

"First," said she, "I wish to be a beautiful princess, dressed in robes of satin sewn with gold, my face all clean and shining, and on my head a coronet of pearls."

"Second, I wish to dwell within a splendid castle by the sea and have a hundred rooms all filled full of gold and treasures, and a thousand slaves to do my bidding.

"Third, I wish my old master to sweep crossings in my place. That is all."

"It is enough!" cried Red Cap in amazement. "To look at you, who would ever think you would even know enough to wish such powerful wishes! My store of magic power will be quite gone when all you wish is done; but even so, I have promised, and we Red Caps always keep our promises. Go home and wait quietly."

So Little Sweep flung down her broom, although it was but two o'clock in the afternoon and she had yet to work until sundown, unless she wished a beating. Her old master was seated in the kitchen, stirring up a bowl of porridge, when she entered.

"Lazy one! Idle one!" he cried out in anger as she entered. "Is it thus you leave your work at midday? But I have something to make you lively." He seized the rope. But for once in her life Little Sweep was not afraid.

"You had better not," said she boldly. The old master heeded her not, however, and raised the rope to strike. Before it fell, he screamed in amazement! Little Sweep's rags fell from her suddenly, and she stood before him, a

beautiful princess robed in satin, and on her haughty brow a coronet of pearls.

"Oh! Oh!" cried the old master in dismay. "Had I known you were a beautiful princess in disguise, never, never would I have beaten you; neither would I have starved you, you may be sure."

"That makes no difference now," replied the haughty princess with spirit; "why did you beat me at all?" As she spoke, the old master screamed again, this time in wildest terror. His garments changed suddenly to sweeper's rags, and into his hands flew the very broom that Little Sweep had just flung down! In this poor guise the old master fell upon his knees and humbly begged a penny of the haughty princess. But again she would not heed him.

"Out of my way, simpleton!" she exclaimed. "Now go and sweep crossings in my place, and may your new master beat you even as you beat me!"

With that the new master entered the kitchen, and finding there the old master dressed in sweeper's rags, sent him off with a cuff to go about his work. A coach of pearl with silver

trimmings drew up before the door, and away went the haughty princess to her castle by the sea.

There, as she had wished, she found a hundred rooms filled full of gold and treasures, and likewise found a thousand slaves to do her bidding. But in the midst of all her glory and magnificence, the beautiful princess was greatly worried. Can you think what troubled her? It was exactly this. She had not a name suitable for her fine situation. "Little Sweep" would never do for a beautiful princess, dwelling in a splendid castle by the sea; also she was vexed lest her thousand slaves should perchance learn that she had once swept crossings, and so despise her. While she sat thinking thus, and greatly troubled, she heard soft chimes sounding through the castle halls. Presently a servant dressed in crimson plush and golden lace entered and bowed low before her.

"Will the Princess Cendre be pleased to dine?" asked the servant humbly, and so it was that the haughty princess learned her new name. From that time forth she quite

forgot that she had ever been called "Little Sweep."

"Lead the way, slave," she commanded haughtily, "and the Princess Cendre will follow."

Then down to a great dining hall she went. Upon the walls were many mirrors, and the table was laid with dishes of beaten gold. The Princess Cendre (for we may never again call her Little Sweep, unless we wish to make her very angry) gazed with delight at her image reflected in the mirrors and ate with greatest satisfaction from the golden dishes. When at last the meal was done, musicians played sweet airs for her pleasure. Princess Cendre enjoyed the music, but oh, much more did she enjoy gazing about the splendid hall wherein she sat! A thousand tapers made all as bright as day; the walls were hung with silken tapestries, and curtains made of lace as fine as cobwebs covered all the windows. It was while she sat gazing thus that Princess Cendre suddenly bethought her of the little cottage Sweep had furnished for her. Then it came also to her mind that to-morrow was her wedding day.

"Well, to be sure," thought she, "if all these

wondrous things had never happened, I would have married Sweep. But now that would never do. Sweep could not expect it. His black face would ill become my splendid castle by the sea."

The musicians then sang good-night songs, and Princess Cendre sought her room once more. There on a table she found several books with her title, "Princess Cendre," stamped in golden letters on the covers. She was more than pleased to see how it was written; she had been wondering how she would even manage to spell this fine new name of hers. Before she slept that night, she took pen and paper and practiced writing "Princess Cendre" a hundred times, that she might do it gracefully forever after. (While she had been a wretched little Crossing Sweeper, she had not learned much in books, you know. So it was that she did not know that "Princess Cendre" meant naught but "Princess Sweep" in a foreign language.)

II

Now we must leave this selfish Princess Cendre sweetly sleeping in her castle by the

sea and make our way back to Sweep's snug little garret once again. On the night of this eventful day Sweep returned home from his labors very late. There was no light in the attic just across the way, but he was quite content. He thought, of course, his Little Sweep was safely tucked up there. Before he ate his bread and cheese, he tossed three sugar cookies in at her window, and then set about polishing his shoes and making himself extra smart for the morrow. Sweep's candle burned very late; but even so, when he lay down to sleep at last, he dreamed such dreadful dreams that he was glad when morning came. He dreamed that he had lost his Little Sweep, and that he married in her stead her broomstick dressed up in the little gray wedding frock. The clock with the loud ringing bell wakened him at last, and Sweep dressed himself in all his holiday attire. Then he called softly to the attic just across the way.

"Wake up, my Little Sweep," said he; "this is your wedding day." He tossed in a bright red apple, and presently a head was thrust forth from the attic window opposite. Not Little

Sweep's, as of course he had expected, but the shocking, tousled head of the old master.

"Ah, kind Sweep!" exclaimed the old master, "I do most greatly thank thee for the sugar cookies and the red apple."

"But those sugar cookies and red apple were not for you, old villain!" cried Sweep. "They were for my darling Little Sweep. Give them to her at once, I say."

"Oh, pray, good Sweep! I cannot give the sugar cookies or the red apple to Little Sweep, because I have already eaten them myself; besides, she is no longer here, you know," replied the old master, and then began to tell the tale of wonders he had seen the day before.

Sweep listened in amazement. "Now if I find you have not told me true," cried he, "I will surely do you a mischief!" Then down the stairs he sped, and over across the way. There, as the old master had declared, Sweep found the new master in the kitchen. The new master was a pleasant youth, and of amiable manners. He invited Sweep to stay and eat breakfast with him, but Sweep, as

you may suppose, was of no mind to eat. Instead, he begged for news of Little Sweep.

"Indeed, I have seen no such person here," replied Master Jasper, "but this I did see, which did most greatly astonish me. Yesterday, as I came into this kitchen, a beautiful princess robed in shining satin swept past me, and stepping into a coach of pearl was whirled from sight. That old villain yonder began to mumble that this lovely princess had once been his slave. Of course, I heeded him not, but fetched him a sharp cuff on the ear and bade him go about his work."

Sweep now begged leave to look up in the attic, if the new master would permit. Master Jasper gave him leave and led the way himself. Sweep followed him with lagging tread. He now began to fear that this strange tale might be true after all. Sadly he gazed about the cold, bare little room. There in one corner he saw the bright-colored pasteboard box that he had made for Little Sweep's poor treasures, and close by, on a peg, hung the little gray wedding frock and the red ribbon he had bought her.

"Alas!" mourned Sweep, "it is all my fault! If my heart had not been thus so stubbornly set upon a cottage with many chimneys, Little Sweep and I would have been married long since, and then, of course, all this magic would never have happened." The honest fellow wept bitter tears that left great tracks all down his sooty face and made him look the very picture of woe. Young Master Jasper felt sorry for him. He too had lost his love, it seemed, and so he sought to comfort Sweep as best he could.

"Come, Sweep!" cried Master Jasper when he had heard. "All is not yet lost. If Little Sweep loved you as dearly as you say, then she will only love you ten times more, now that she is a princess! The thing for you to do is this. Go seek until you find the castle or the palace wherein she dwells. Who knows — why, even at this very moment she may be crying her eyes out, because it is her wedding day, and yet Sweep has not come!"

These words cheered Sweep. His spirits rose, and so he dried his tears at once and then set out to seek the castle where his Little Sweep in

the guise of some fair princess might be dwelling. But though he sought the whole day through, he sought in vain. When it was growing late, he left the crowded city streets and ways and found himself among the open fields and lanes. Then by and by, at twilight time, Sweep walked beside the borders of the sea. There he sat down to rest, for he was very weary. He tossed aside his cap and sighed to think how happy he had been but last night, when he thrust the gay green feather in it. Then he became aware of a voice speaking to him.

"I know where Little Sweep is dwelling," said the voice, and peering down, Sweep saw a tiny Red Cap perched upon his knee. (It was the very Red Cap that had hidden in Little Sweep's pocket the day before.) "If you wish, I can take you there," continued Red Cap in a friendly fashion.

"Ah, Red Cap, if you only would!" cried Sweep. "My heart is broken because I cannot find my darling."

"Then close your eyes and do not open them until I say," commanded Red Cap.

Sweep closed his eyes and felt himself a-sailing

through the air. He sailed so fast that he had scarcely time to draw a breath before he felt himself set down upon the earth once more.

"Now look about you," commanded Red Cap.

Sweep obeyed. He found himself within a stately hall of marble; the walls were carved with gold and coral, all in intricate designs, and there, upon a throne of ivory set with gleaming sapphires, was seated Princess Cendre. Her flowing robes of shimmering white seemed made of moonbeams sewn together, so soft and luminous were they. Her hair, black as a raven's wing, was bound with ropes of pearls and diamonds. The Princess Cendre sat so still that Sweep at first believed she was some lovely carven image he beheld. There was little to make one think of Little Sweep, save that when the Princess Cendre spoke, her voice was Little Sweep's.

"What brings you hither, Sweep?" cried Princess Cendre angrily, when she became aware of him.

Sweep was astonished, but answered mildly, even so.

"Ah, Little Sweep," said he, "now who would think that fine new raiment and a face all clean and shining would make this wondrous change in you? But perchance, if you had ever worn the new gray frock I bought you for our wedding, I would have known about your beauty."

"My name is Little Sweep no longer, but Princess Cendre, I would have you know," she answered coldly. "And what have I to do with gray wedding frocks, I should like to know?"

"Why, Little Sweep," began Sweep in great surprise, but she interrupted him.

"Princess Cendre, if you please!" cried she.

"Well, Princess Cendre, then," said Sweep. "Have you forgot that this is our wedding day? I thought perhaps you would be grieved as I that we were parted, and so I came hither to marry thee."

"To marry me!" exclaimed the Princess Cendre in astonishment. "With your black face, do you suppose that I would marry you? I am the Princess Cendre, you must not forget. And Sweep, if this be your wedding day, as you say it is, my advice to you is this: Marry

the Crossing Sweeper of your choice, and if you cannot find her, choose another. The city is full of such poor wretches; there are two or three at every corner."

Sweep could scarcely believe that he had heard aright. He had not dreamed his Little Sweep would treat him thus. He was surprised and pained to hear her use so many harsh words all at once. He had not thought she knew any. In the old days when she had swept crossings for a penny she had always been a gentle little creature.

"Surely you are joking, just to try me," cried poor Sweep. "If you had loved truly, as you did often say, then though you did become empress of all the world, you would love me still. My face is no blacker to-day than it was yesterday or the day before that. Do not treat me thus coldly, Little Sweep, or you will break my heart."

"And if you call me by that name again, I will have my servants cast you from my topmost turret and break your head," replied the Princess Cendre in a towering rage.

"When I was naught but a Crossing Sweeper,

beaten always and half starved, you gave me bread and buns and bade me love you. To be sure, I ate the bread and buns because I was hungry. But now that I am become a princess and no longer need your gifts, my heart bids me to marry none but a prince. Moreover, the prince whom I shall wed must be handsome and charming, and his lands and wealth must be greater than my lands and wealth, which are very great indeed. So get you gone, now, Sweep. You see how foolish was your errand."

Poor Sweep stood gazing silently at the haughty princess, so fair to see and yet so hard of heart. Presently Red Cap bade him close his eyes again. Sweep closed his eyes and found himself a-sailing through the air, and once again he found himself upon the borders of the sea.

"Ah, Sweep, I am the cause of all thy misfortune," said Red Cap sadly.

"How so, my little friend?" asked Sweep.

"It is this way," said Red Cap. "If I had not vexed my brother yesterday, he would not have chased me so fiercely, and I would never have sought shelter in Little Sweep's pocket. Now, if I had not sought shelter in Little

Sweep's pocket, I would never have given her three wishes, and she would never have become the Princess Cendre, but would have married you upon her wedding day."

"But even so, Red Cap," sighed Sweep sadly, "you are not at fault. Had Little Sweep desired, she might have wished me to be something high along with her. But though she has been ungrateful and selfish, too, I love her dearly and cannot bear to say a harsh word of her."

Red Cap was surprised at Sweep's gentle speech. He had expected him to abuse Little Sweep and say unkind things of the haughty Princess Cendre. In all his dealings with mortals (and he had many, for Red Cap was nearly, if not quite, a thousand years of age), he had noticed that mortals were prone to speak ill of those who had injured them. "Without doubt this black-faced Sweep is of noble heart," thought Red Cap, "but I shall try him even further."

Aloud he spoke: "Now, Sweep," said Red Cap, "I have no more magic of the sort that can raise folk to wealth or high rank and noble

station; but I have still great power to destroy. Say but a word, and in an instant I will destroy the castle by the sea. The Princess Cendre in a flash will turn to Little Sweep; the old master will be back in the kitchen, and young Master Jasper will be in his uncle's house once more. What do you say to this plan?"

"To that I must say no," said Sweep. "I think it most unworthy."

"Then, Sweep, since you will have none of my plan, I must be off," said Red Cap. "But hark you; although I have not magic power in great store, if you desire aid at any time, make but a simple wish, and I will instantly appear to help you. Now farewell!" he cried, and darted off.

III

Poor Sweep! Now that his Little Sweep had treated him so cruelly, he became the saddest man that one could ever know. For days and days he did nothing, but would sit with his head in his hands, staring at the wall, thinking only of his Little Sweep. Nothing could arouse him, until at last Master Jasper stepped across the way and scolded him roundly.

"Now, Sweep, this will not do!" cried Master Jasper. "The bread and cakes and pies will burn in the ovens all over the land, if the chimneys be not neatly swept down. Then how the housewives will scold, to be sure! Likewise will the merchants say that Sweep is become a lazy fellow, who sits idling all day long." Master Jasper, it will be seen, was a sensible youth, as well as amiable and agreeable.

So once again Sweep set out with his smart little donkey cart all filled with brooms and brushes. He found many a housewife angry because he had delayed her spring house-cleaning; but when these angry housewives looked at Sweep's black face, so sad and sorrowful, they had not the heart to upbraid him. Now, strange to say, though Sweep was thus so dull and disconsolate, his trade of sweeping down tall chimneys thrived as it never had thrived before. He swept tall chimneys in the north of the kingdom, and in the south also. Likewise he could often be seen driving his smart little donkey cart to the east or to the west to sweep tall chimneys there. The fame of Sweep's skill began to grow; he swept the chimneys in the halls of dukes

and earls. Indeed, the king and queen commanded Sweep to bring his brooms and brushes and set to work about the palace. Their majesties, it seemed, had been greatly troubled because the royal kitchen chimney sent the smoke down instead of up and made the royal cooks and maidens sneeze and sputter all day long. So skillfully did Sweep deal with this stubborn chimney that ever afterward it sent the smoke sky-high, as proper chimneys should. The royal cooks and maidens sneezed and sputtered no more, and their royal majesties were grateful as could be. The king with his own hands pinned a royal decoration on Sweep's sooty sleeve. (But if I am to tell the truth, I must tell too that from much soot and grime and dust this royal decoration soon became as black as Sweep's own sooty sleeve and could not be seen unless one looked quite closely.)

Now that his trade was thriving thus excellently and he had no longer need to buy bread and buns for Little Sweep, Sweep's pennies grew to golden dollars very rapidly. The golden dollars in their turn soon filled the second stocking full, and even filled a third before Sweep was

well aware of it. But even so, he took no pleasure in his wealth; he sighed instead because he had no longer Little Sweep to share it with him. Then, lest he become a miser hoarding gold and spending it not, Sweep at last bethought him of a kindly plan. Throughout the kingdom there were thousands and thousands of other little Crossing Sweepers, two or three at every corner waiting for a penny. These wretches, Sweep knew well, were just as poor and miserable as his own Little Sweep had been in days gone by. According to his kindly plan, Sweep now began to change his store of golden dollars back to pennies once again. Then when he met a little Crossing Sweeper standing broom in hand, Sweep would fling a handful of pennies to the little creature. Sometimes he filled his donkey cart with bread and buns and bright red apples to feed these little Crossing Sweepers, in memory of his own lost Little Sweep. Until at last from these good practices Sweep became known as the friend of all Crossing Sweepers, and was greatly loved throughout the land.

So seven years passed by. Meanwhile Sweep

and Master Jasper continued friends. Sometimes Sweep stayed to supper in Master Jasper's comfortable kitchen; other times Sweep would bid Master Jasper step across and smoke a pipe or two with him. Then, one evening just at dusk, Sweep returned from his labors and found young Master Jasper packed and ready for a journey.

"Where are you off?" asked Sweep, and pointed to a musket flung beside a knapsack.

"Have you not heard the news?" cried Master Jasper eagerly. "A whole year since, a savage tribe invaded Yelvaland and carried off as prisoner the young and lovely Empress Yelva. Now as this lovely empress has neither father nor husband nor brothers to protect her, and her people cry for aid, all youths who long for noble adventure are urged to fight beneath her banners. Come join me, Sweep."

But Sweep shook his head. "It is not suitable that I should fight for Empress Yelva," he replied. "My black face fits me for naught but my trade of sweeping down tall chimneys."

"But you are wrong, Sweep," argued Master Jasper; "a black face in battle is no great mat-

ter. Stout hearts and strong arms are sorely needed. Come, and we shall march and fight together as brothers."

Again Sweep shook his head. "Indeed, good Master Jasper," answered he, "I wish with all my heart that I might fight with thee against this savage tribe and aid the lovely Empress Yelva; but alas! Who, save thee, would care to march and fight beside a black-faced sweep?"

"A thousand would! Two thousand would — Nay! ten thousand would be glad to march with thee, Sweep!" exclaimed a shrill small voice beside them. On peering down, Sweep beheld a tiny Red Cap perched upon the poker; it was the same that had befriended him so long ago.

"Ah, Sweep!" continued Red Cap briskly, "I took a fancy to you when we first met, seven years ago, and had a notion then that I would like to know you better. However, since in all these years you have not wished a wish of me, I could not have the joy of your acquaintance. We Red Caps," he explained, "although we be such powerful folk, cannot appear to mortals without they wish for us, you know."

"I had not known that," answered Sweep politely, "or I would have wished some simple thing just for the pleasure of a chat with thee. But tell me, how is it that you thus appear before me now?"

"Have you so soon forgot your wish?" asked Red Cap. "Did I not hear you wish a moment since to fight beneath the banners of the Empress Yelva? It is to grant that wish that I now come. And mark, since in seven years you have wished no wish of me, my magic now has grown to power tremendous. Behold thine army!"

Sweep heard the measured tramp of many feet, and looking through the gathering gloom, beheld a line of forms that marched by, four and four, and all were singing gayly as they went. At first Sweep could not tell what manner of soldiers these might be, but presently his eyes became accustomed to the dusk, and he perceived that this vast army was composed of Crossing Sweepers armed with brooms instead of muskets. Perched atop of every broomstick he could see a tiny creature similar in looks and dress to the Red Cap perched upon the poker.

"My brothers and my cousins and likewise all my friends and uncles have come to help thee too, Sweep," said Red Cap. "And thou, good Master Jasper, throw aside thy musket, for in Sweep's army, muskets and such like will be useless things."

Good Master Jasper quickly did as Red Cap had commanded and followed after Sweep. Sweep shouldered his long brush and marched proudly at the head of his strange army. And thus began the journey into Yelvaland.

Now of that journey there is not much to tell. To be sure, whenever it was time for breakfast, dinner, or supper, the Red Caps clapped their hands and there appeared a thousand tables spread with all good fare. When night fell, or when storms arose, the Red Caps likewise caused a city of ten thousand tents to spring up on the plains. The Crossing Sweepers enjoyed the whole march as a holiday. In all their wretched lives before they had not had such good things to eat. Their hollow cheeks grew plump and rosy with the winds and sun, and Sweep's heart rejoiced to see the happy changes that came upon his friends. At night when they sat grouped

about their campfires, the Crossing Sweepers sang songs loud in praise of Sweep, whom they declared had always been their friend and who now was the cause of their pleasant holiday.

Now while Sweep and his strange army were marching thus toward Yelvaland, the people there were plunged in deep despair. The savage troops had given their soldiers so many drubbings and such bitter punishments in battle that they had quite lost heart. Judge then of their great joy when they beheld a friendly force marching to their aid. But as this horde drew near, and they perceived what manner of army it really was, their hearts sank again.

"Alas!" sighed these discouraged folk of Yelvaland, "of what avail against the savage troops will be this ragged rabble that approaches?"

But when Sweep's army entered into Yelvaland and began to lay about them with their broomsticks, that was another story. Aided by the magic power of the Red Caps, each broomstick fell with the force of fifty giant fists and resounded loud as thunder on the mountain tops. The savage troops stood their ground

but a short time and then fled in terror before these strange and powerful weapons which they had never seen before. (Savages do not sweep their houses, you know, and so they knew nothing of the useful broomstick.) Sweep, gallantly leading his vast army, pursued the flying savages and gave them battle all the while. So dextrously and well did the little Crossing Sweepers wield their brooms that on the third night, when both armies had agreed to rest, these savage troops rose up and stole off. Over the hills and far away they fled and never again were heard or seen from that day to this. The glorious part of Sweep's great victory was that he had not lost a single follower in battle!

"And now to free the young and lovely Empress Yelva," said Sweep to Red Cap, "and then our work is done."

"In all good time that too will be accomplished," answered Red Cap. "The Empress Yelva lies hidden deep down in a well of her own tears. This well lies close beside the gates of Yelvaland, and so you had best face your army right about and march there."

Then once again the Crossing Sweepers shoul-

dered their brooms and marched gayly off to Yelvaland. They reached the gates of the kingdom just as the moon was sinking slowly in the sky, and Sweep gave orders that they wait until the dawn to enter.

"Come with me, Sweep," whispered Red Cap; "the time has come to seek the Empress Yelva," and led him to a well within a grove of trees.

"Now, Sweep, attend me closely," warned Red Cap, "for if you do not as I say, all will be lost. When the moon's last ray will light the waters of this well, plunge down into its depths and bring the Empress Yelva up with you. Lose not a second's time, for if the moonbeam leave the well before you, the lovely Empress Yelva must forever remain prisoner and yourself likewise. Do you think that you are nimble enough to try?"

"I know not of my nimbleness, but I will try," said Sweep, and plunged down headlong, as a pale moonbeam shone down and silvered the dark waters. Before the winking of an eye, it seemed, he rose again, clasping the Empress Yelva by the hand. The moonbeam tarried

long enough for Sweep to see the lovely maiden he had rescued. Her eyes like two blue violets shone with kindliness, her golden hair fell rippling like a cloak about her, and when she spoke her voice was like the chime of silver bells.

"Ah, sir!" exclaimed the lovely Empress Yelva. "Although from your poor dress I know that you are naught but a humble Sweep, I honor you for your brave deed, and I shall wed you."

At this poor Sweep was covered with confusion. He had not dreamed the lovely Empress Yelva would so much as deign to thank him; had not the haughty Princess Cendre scorned him? But even so his heart still longed for his first love, and knowing nothing better to do, the honest fellow told his sad tale to the empress, as they stood beside the well. She listened closely all the while.

"You have a noble heart, good Sweep," said she when he had done, "and though you do not choose to wed me, I bear you no malice, but instead shall help you win your Little Sweep, who has become the Princess Cendre."

"Alas, your worship!" said Sweep sadly,

"that can never be. The Princess Cendre would scorn my black face, no matter what my fame or fortune."

"Why as to that, Sweep," cried Red Cap, "have no more concern. The Empress Yelva's tears, it would seem, are magic, for since you have plunged down the well, your face is become clean and white as though 't were scrubbed a dozen times. You are now a handsome fellow."

"And when I have rewarded you suitably, the Princess Cendre will be more than glad to wed you, rest assured, good Sweep," said Empress Yelva. "But now the dawn is here, so let us hasten that I may see my people and my own dear Yelvaland once more."

You may imagine that there was wild rejoicing when Sweep and his vast strange army knocked upon the gates of the kingdom and demanded that they open wide for Empress Yelva. A holiday that lasted seven days was set, and there were games and sports and pleasures. The people sang and danced upon the highways, and oxen were roasted whole upon great bonfires. Sweep and all the Crossing Sweepers were praised and honored throughout the length

and breadth of Yelvaland, and all was merry as could be.

When this great holiday was passed, as holidays all do, the business of the court began again. The Empress Yelva ordered that a cottage and a piece of ground, as well as two bags filled with gold, be given to each Crossing Sweeper in reward for their brave deeds. The Crossing Sweepers were so delighted with their gifts that they never again returned to their own land but dwelled in Yelvaland for all their days. The Red Caps likewise were so pleased with lovely Empress Yelva and so admired her kind heart and sense of gratitude that they decided from that day to make their home among the forests of her realm.

"And now, Sweep," said the Empress Yelva, when all this was done, "I have not forgot the promise that I made thee." Accordingly she made him prince. His title was Prince Sweepmore and his domain of Sweepmost was twice as great and twice as rich as was the domain of haughty Princess Cendre. Sweep now was dressed in crimson velvet. The Empress Yelva from her treasure store gave him a golden sword

all set with rubies that flashed forth flame and fire in the sun. A hundred horses laden all with bags of gold and pearls were also given him, as well as a like number of servants to attend him. Then once again Sweep set forth to marry Princess Cendre.

"I grieve to see thee go, good Sweep," sighed Empress Yelva as they parted, "but even so I do admire thy faithful heart that bids thee go."

"And I likewise do grieve to go; and I thank thee for thy gifts," Sweep answered. He bade young Master Jasper farewell too. Young Master Jasper had fallen deep in love with a noble maiden of the Empress Yelva's court and was about to marry her.

A royal messenger had been sent before to tell these tidings to the Princess Cendre. Now, strange to say, though the haughty Princess was thus beautiful and wealthy, she was still unwed. To be sure, many princes of small fortunes had sought her hand, but of these the haughty creature would have none. However, her selfish ways had not pleased princes whom she had desired to please, and so it was she sat alone within her splendid castle by the sea. You may

be sure that she rejoiced when she learned that Sweep was now a prince with land and riches in good store.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "his face is clean and shining too, I hear, which is excellent. I could not tolerate him otherwise; but as it is, I shall delight to wed him." And so the haughty princess sent for milliners and jewelers and for bootmakers and dressmakers too. She bought such silken hose and high-heeled shoes as must have cost a fortune, and had her wedding dress sewn thick with diamonds. When word was brought that the new prince was come, she donned this sparkling robe and received him with great courtesy.

"Ah, Sweep!" cried she, "although I know full well that Empress Yelva hath given thee a fine new title, I love to call thee by the dear old name I used to know. Tell me of thy life since last we parted. I have heard the Empress Yelva desired to marry thee herself. The forward creature! I blush for her that she should be so bold. She must be very plain of face indeed if she must go a-seeking for a husband."

To these sharp words Sweep made reply:

"Indeed, the Empress Yelva is so fair of face that neither tongue nor pen can well describe her beauty. Moreover, she is so kind of heart and gentle of manner that though she were as plain as plain, I still would think her lovely!"

"Indeed!" returned the haughty Princess Cendre and gazed with satisfaction in her mirror. "However, it is not to chat about this forward creature that you have come hither; it is to wed me. Come, my bishops are in readiness; my guests are waiting."

Now, when Sweep at last beheld this haughty Princess after seven years of longing, he found a curious change had come upon him. He became aware that he no longer loved her, and that her haughty manner and her spiteful speech distressed him. At last he saw her as she really was, an ungrateful, cold-hearted creature who thought of no one but herself. (Although Sweep knew it not, the waters of the well had wrought this change in him. You may be sure that Red Cap was aware of it!) So though his heart was grieved to give another pain, Sweep determined to speak his mind quite plainly.

"Ah, Princess Cendre," said he, "I fear me you must tell your guests that you have changed your mind and bid your bishops go. For since my black face has been changed as though by magic, it would seem my heart and mind by magic were changed too. I know now that thou art too cold and proud to be my princess; a princess should delight to make folk happy, and that I fear me you would never do."

The Princess Cendre was enraged at this talk. We well know that she had a dreadful temper when it was aroused, and she chose to rouse it now. She stormed and she scolded; she threatened Sweep and she denounced him; but she could not move his resolution.

"You have come hither to wed me. This is my wedding day, and you shall not ride away!" cried she.

"Nay, but I will," returned Sweep. "Once before I came hither to wed thee on thy wedding day, and once before I rode away. And so farewell!"

Away rode Sweep with all his train, and stopped nor stayed until he reached the gates of Yelvaland. A herald told the news of his approach,

and Empress Yelva with her noble lords and ladies went forth to welcome him. Sweep fell upon his knee and humbly begged the lovely maiden's hand in marriage, and Empress Yelva smilingly consented.

"Indeed, dear Sweep!" declared the Empress Yelva, "I had a notion all the while that you would soon return, and had our wedding feast prepared!" (Now could it have been that the Red Caps whispered of the magic change the well of her own tears had caused?)

Then straightway Sweep and Empress Yelva were married. Young Master Jasper and the noble maiden were married too; it was a double wedding. Another feast was held, so bounteous and so magnificent that all previous feasts seemed poor and mean by comparison. Sports and games were set, and prizes of great value were awarded. Each nobleman received a bag of diamonds as a gift, each noble lady a rope of pearls. The common people, one and all, were given each a bag of golden coins that they too might make merry. The lords and dukes danced on the highways with the dairymaids; the Empress Yelva and her ladies trod minuets with

shepherd lads and farmer boys, and all was merry as a marriage feast should be.

Sweep now was Emperor. He wore a robe of purple bordered deep with ermine, and held a sceptre clustered thick with diamonds when he sat at court. With Empress Yelva by his side, he now rode forth in a spendid chariot of gold and royal enamels. But though he was thus raised to high rank and great wealth, Sweep was as amiable and as kind of heart as he had been when he swept down tall chimneys for his living and drove his donkey cart all filled with brooms and brushes. To tell the truth, however, Sweep had little opportunity to do kind deeds. There were no poor folk to be found in Yelvaland. The Empress Yelva governed her realm too well and wisely for that. Now it happened on one winter's day, when all the ground was white, Sweep noticed that the frost hung thick and glistened on the branches of the firs and cedars.

"It seems to me, my dear," said Sweep to Empress Yelva, "that it would be most suitable if we should build some houses for our little friends, the Red Caps, who are dwelling in our

forest. I fear me that they suffer greatly from the cold."

The Empress Yelva thought this plan most excellent, and soon the royal carpenters and joiners were set to making tiny little houses. When these were made, the royal painters colored them bright green with bright red roofs, which was quite like the costume of the Red Caps, if you will remark. The Empress Yelva and her noble lords and ladies then hung these tiny houses in the branches of the firs and cedars, and they looked like so many brightly colored bird-houses. When the Red Caps flew home that night, they were delighted; they guessed at once for whom these tiny houses were meant. They praised Sweep and complimented him on his kind heart and his thoughtful ways.

"We Red Caps do many kind things for mortals," they remarked most sagely to each other, "but it is seldom mortals ever think to do kind things for us. It is quite fitting that Sweep should be Emperor; he hath a noble heart, as sovereigns all should have."

It happened then upon another day, while still the snow lay thick upon the ground, that

Princess Cendre and her servants went a-riding through this forest. The haughty princess marked the tiny brightly colored houses, and asked what they might be. A forester near by made answer thus:

"Now if your royal highness please," said he, "Sweep, our good Emperor, hath caused these to be made for our little friends, the Red Caps. They suffered greatly with the cold, he thought."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the Princess Cendre. "Then your little friends, the Red Caps, must suffer from the cold again, I fear. I have taken a great fancy to these pretty toys and mean to hang them in my own forests, that my goldfinches and nightingales may dwell therein in winter, instead of flying to the southland." She then desired her servants to cut down the tiny, brightly colored houses and rode off, little thinking of the mischief she had done.

That night, when the Red Caps flew home, they were agitated and buzzed about like so many angry little bees. They missed their tiny comfortable houses and shivered with the cold. They knew, of course, who had done this. They

knew all things — these Red Caps of the olden days.

"Now this haughty Princess Cendre is impossible!" they declared most wrathfully. "She cares not though we freeze to death; although we have done noble things for her, she has quite forgot them. She has been princess long enough!" they cried. "Let her be Little Sweep again," and they clapped their hands in anger.

Then in that instant vanished the splendid castle by the sea, and Princess Cendre's robes of satin fell from her. She found herself dressed out in sweeper's rags, and once more, broom in hand, standing on her corner. The old master, back within his comfortable kitchen again, was disposed to treat her no better than he had before; and so, for all her days, Little Sweep was forced to dwell within her cold, bare attic. But there was no kind Sweep to toss her bread and buns each day nor buy her bright red apples or plum cake.

Sweep, on the other hand, lived long and happily as Emperor. He and the lovely Empress Yelva, it is said, were blessed with twenty children, all of whom inherited Sweep's noble nature and his kindly heart.

CHAPTER VIII

KINGS AND QUEENS AND PEASANT FOLK

ONCE upon a time, in a splendid palace on the top of a high hill, there dwelled a very old king and his wife, who was likewise a very old queen. Now this royal old couple lived in great state and luxury. Their diamond crowns glittered and sparkled like the sunbeams on a summer sea; and their trailing velvet robes were so thickly embroidered with gold that they stood alone. This very old king and his wife, the very old queen, had a coach of gold and glass drawn by eight white horses in silver harness. But with all this splendor and magnificence, this royal old couple were not happy or contented. Indeed they were called Queen Grumpy and King Crosspatch, which names were most suitable, for they were discontented and disagreeable as the day was long.

Queen Grumpy fretted because she had a

hundred ladies-in-waiting. She said they bothered her. King Crosspatch scolded and sulked because Lord High Chancellor would not permit him to smoke a briarwood pipe. They both declared their diamond crowns gave them a headache, and they were tired of their trailing velvet robes. Queen Grumpy and King Crosspatch refused to ride in their royal coach of gold and glass. The eight white horses trotted too swiftly and shook their old bones about. So this very old king and this very old queen went afoot; but even so, they complained and scolded because all the roads about the palace led either up a hill or down, and they puffed and panted for breath before their walk was done.

Now often and often at sunset, as they rested on their way up the high hill, Queen Grumpy and King Crosspatch looked with longing on a certain snug little cottage down in the valley. Within this snug little cottage lived a very old man and his very old wife. They were peasants. There were rows and rows of sunflowers and hollyhocks before this snug little cottage and behind, while to the left and right stretched green pastures thick with blackberry vines.

"Ah, my dear!" King Crosspatch would sigh, as he watched the old man at work. "How pleasant it must be to live in such a snug little cottage. That old man goes every evening to fetch the cows. How I wish I were that old man!"

"Indeed, yes!" Queen Grumpy would reply with an answering sigh. "How I wish I were that old woman. She goes about from morning until night, so brisk and blithe. She can bake bread and churn butter herself; she is not bothered with a hundred ladies-in-waiting as I am."

Now most remarkable to tell, often as Queen Grumpy and King Crosspatch gazed thus longingly at the little cottage so snug, and wished themselves the old man and the old woman, the old man and the old woman gazed just as longingly on the splendid palace and wished themselves King Crosspatch and Queen Grumpy. For if you will believe me, this old man and his old wife were a most discontented couple too!

So it happened one evening, when Queen Grumpy and King Crosspatch were walking down the hill, they met the old man and his old

wife climbing up. So while they sat to rest on a stone stile, these four discontented old folk fell to talking.

"Ah!" exclaimed King Crosspatch to the old man, "I have often watched you fetch the cows home from pasture in the evening, and what fun it seems, to be sure! Then you often go a-berrying too. You should be very happy."

"Indeed, Your Royal Highness, I am not!" replied the old man with bitter feeling. "I am tired of fetching cows, and I would like to sit still all day with folded hands. I often wish I were you. As for going a-berrying; I go only because I am so fond of blackberry pie. There 's one for my supper to-night," he added, and smacked his lips with relish. And then, oh, how King Crosspatch envied the old man! King Crosspatch had longed to eat blackberry pie all his life, but the court physician would not permit such ordinary food on the royal table. So the poor old king had never had even a taste of a blackberry pie.

"And you too," said Queen Grumpy to the old woman, "you should be very happy. You loop your dress above your red flannel petticoat

and trot round all day, baking bread and churning butter. You have nothing ever to vex or worry you."

"Nothing to vex or worry me!" repeated the old woman in astonishment. "Why, I am vexed that I must churn my butter, and at this very minute I am worried lest the loaves I left baking in the oven may burn before I am home again. And indeed, Your Royal Highness, I loop my dress above my red flannel petticoat only because I must. A hundred times a day I wish I were you and could wear trailing velvet robes sewn thick with gold!"

Now as these four discontented old folk talked on, a curious plan popped into their heads. They decided to change places. Accordingly, Queen Grumpy took the old woman's dress and looped it above the red flannel petticoat; the old woman buttoned herself into Queen Grumpy's trailing velvet robes. King Crosspatch put on the old man's battered hat; the old man set the sparkling diamond crown above his sunburned brow, and all was done. Then singing and laughing, these four old folk went on their separate ways. All four felt as-

sured that they were really walking on the road to happiness at last, and all were very pleased and jolly in consequence.

"Oh, there 's no place like a palace,
A palace, a palace!
Oh, there 's no place like a palace
Upon a hill so high!"

sang the old man and his old wife as they climbed up the steep hill.

"Oh, there 's no place like a cottage,
A cottage, a cottage!
Oh, there 's no place like a cottage
Down in a valley green!"

sang King Crosspatch and Queen Grumpy, and they went trudging down. Then when they reached the snug little cottage, how pleased they were to be sure! Everything was so cozy and comfortable to behold. The kettle on the hearth was boiling, and the loaves in the oven were browning; the bird in the cage was singing, and the cat on the cushion was purring. The table was laid with all manner of good things for tea.

"The blackberry pie! The blackberry pie! My dear, let 's have it at once!" cried King

Crosspatch, and went searching through cupboard and larder to find it.

"Wait just a moment until I have made the tea," answered Queen Grumpy, busily bustling about the kitchen. She made the tea, and he found the blackberry pie, and then they both sat down to supper. There were ever and ever so many good things on the table. There were cold roast fowls and quince preserves; there were strawberry tarts and plum as well; there was fresh new butter, and there was thick sweet cream. Queen Grumpy and King Crosspatch ate them all and then began to think about dessert!

"Now would you mind, my dear, if I should eat all the blackberry pie myself?" asked King Crosspatch of Queen Grumpy. "You see, I have only read about blackberry pie in books and have never tasted one in all my life before."

"Not at all, my dear!" replied Queen Grumpy most amiably. "I intend to eat all this ginger cake which I have never seen or tasted before." And so this royal old couple continued to eat until both larder and cupboard were bare.

"How fine this little cottage is and how very

snug!" said Queen Grumpy, seating herself in a rocker before the blazing logs. She began to knit on a gray wool sock she found. "I think we shall be very happy here."

"And I think so too," agreed King Crosspatch. "We have eaten a fine supper in a very few minutes and without any fuss of footmen or ladies-in-waiting either." He found a briarwood pipe and began to doze peacefully in deep contentment. Queen Grumpy knitted busily until the logs burned low, when she began to nod and doze also. Then they both went to bed.

But the beds in the snug little cottage were not of the excellent quality of its cold roasted fowls and new butter and jam. The mattresses were rough affairs. They were stuffed here with corn husks and there with straw and yet again with goose feathers, which pricked Queen Grumpy and King Crosspatch like so many pins. On these rough husky beds the royal old couple tossed restlessly until morning. They vowed they did not sleep a wink. (Perhaps they had eaten too much blackberry pie and ginger cake; what do you think about it?)

When it was daylight at last, King Crosspatch clapped his hands to call his servants to attend.

"Ah, my dear!" said Queen Grumpy, "have you forgotten that we are no longer royal folk but simple cottagers instead?"

"Indeed, I had quite forgotten all about it," replied King Crosspatch. "Well, I am glad we are," and he began to dress.

Together they set about making breakfast; but again the breakfast proved a different matter from supper. You will remember that they had eaten everything in the cupboard and larder the night before. There was no milk, for they had forgotten to milk the cow, and neither were there eggs. They had neglected to search the nests. Moreover, the wood box was empty, and the fire was out.

"Now do you go out and chop some wood for the fire, my dear," said Queen Grumpy. "I shall milk the cow. I have always liked to look at pictures of milkmaids." She took the pail on her arm and went in search of the three-legged stool. Then she seated herself beside Bossy-Cow and began to milk. But sad to tell, Bossy-Cow, who herself was rather dis-

agreeable, waited until the pail was nearly filled, and then she gave a sudden kick. Such a vicious kick it was, too! It upset the milk-pail, three-legged stool, Queen Grumpy and all, and frightened the poor old queen half out of her wits. She began to scream so loudly that she quite frightened King Crosspatch, and the hatchet slipped and chopped a bit of his little finger.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" wailed King Crosspatch at the very top of his voice. "I think this hatchet is bewitched! Oh! Oh! Oh!" he wept, holding up his little finger. (It was not much of a cut; just a little scratch; but he was a great crosspatch, you know.) "Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do?" he wailed. "With this terrible cut on my little finger, I can't do anything at all!"

"There now, there now," petted Queen Grumpy soothingly. "Don't chop any more wood. There are still a few drops of milk left in my pail, and we shall drink that and eat bread for our breakfast." She led her weeping husband within the snug little cottage, but when she looked in the oven she found another

disappointment. Queen Grumpy had forgotten to take the loaves out of the oven the night before, and they were burned to a crisp.

"Oh, this plagued cottage!" exclaimed Queen Grumpy, thoroughly vexed. "Everything goes wrong here. I wish I were back in my own palace once more! I would never sigh again to leave it."

"Neither would I," agreed King Crosspatch, drying his tears suddenly. "Let's go back!"

They made up their minds in an instant, and slamming the door of the snug little cottage, they began to climb the steep hill to their splendid palace. Every step of the way they were in a perfect torment of fear lest the old man and the old woman would refuse to change places again.

"That old woman will never want to give me my trailing velvet robes," said Queen Grumpy, as they sat to rest on the stone stile.

"And I have been thinking that the old man will fight to keep my diamond crown," said King Crosspatch anxiously. But at that very minute they heard voices, and behold! around

the turn in the road came the old man and old woman, hurrying as though an army were after them. The old man was thumping his stick, and the old woman was making angry gestures with her hands; and both the old man and the old woman looked very cross and ill-humored.

"Ah, here you are!" exclaimed the old man, stopping short before the stone stile. "Now give me my hat and take back your hateful crown without any further nonsense! I could not sleep a wink last night, because it was so heavy on my head. Such a hateful palace too! I never saw the like! I could not smoke my briarwood pipe which I brought along for company, and this morning two villains were like to drown me in a pool before I was fully awake."

"They did not try to drown you," replied King Crosspatch haughtily. "That pool was a bath. Here is your hat; give me my crown."

"You may call it a bath or not, just as you choose," declared the old man warmly, "but let those two villains drown you instead of me, is what I say! I was never so disappointed in

all my life as I was with your palace. The royal throne was hard as stone; the royal beds were soft as dough; everything was wrong."

Meanwhile Queen Grumpy and the old woman were having a time of it.

"Your cow has no manners," complained Queen Grumpy. "She kicked me, and she spilled the milk. I should behead her if she were mine."

"Would you, indeed?" asked the old woman scornfully, "and drink water and eat bread without butter all the rest of your life, I suppose? Let me tell you, Your Royal Highness, that your servants are lazy and good-for-nothing! I saw dust on the tops of all the doors and windows, and the silver flagon was not polished as brightly as my old pewter pots. Your royal cooks make griddlecakes heavy as lead; you had best behead them instead of my good Bossy-Cow." Then she added, "Did you feed my bird and give him water?"

"I could hardly feed myself in that awkward cottage of yours!" retorted Queen Grumpy.

"Oh, my poor bird!" exclaimed the old

woman. "Here, hurry and give me back my own dress that I may loop it above my red flannel petticoat and be comfortable once more. I suppose you took the bread out of the oven in time — did you?"

"I forgot it, and it burned," sulkily replied Queen Grumpy, buttoning herself into her trailing velvet robes.

"Oh, what stupid folk are kings and queens!" cried the old woman in a passion. "Come along, husband," she called, and down the hill they went.

"And what stupid folk are cottagers!" called King Crosspatch after them. "Come along, wife," said he, and up the hill they went.

And so these four old folk again went on their separate ways. All four were sure that they were walking on the road to happiness at last, and so all were very jolly and smiling in consequence.

"Oh, there's no place like home!
Oh, there's no place like home!"

sang the old man and his old wife, as they went trudging down to the little cottage so snug.

"Oh, there's no place like home!
Oh, there's no place like home!"

sang Queen Grumpy and King Crosspatch, as they went climbing to their splendid palace on the top of a high hill; and there we will bid them all adieu!

CHAPTER IX

THE GOOSE GIRL AND THE BLUE GANDER

ONCE upon a time there was a goose girl who tended her flock in a green meadow. The meadow was dotted with forget-me-nots and yellow buttercups, and the sun shone down on it; her geese were fine blue geese and uncommonly knowing. She should have been the happiest goose girl in all the world, but she was not. She thought not of the beautiful meadow nor of her geese that were a pleasure to tend, for they were so wise and always did her bidding; but instead this goose girl wept every day because she longed to marry a certain lord who lived in a gray stone castle at the top of a high hill. All day long she sat looking at this castle, and her eyes could see nothing else for admiration of it. She dreamed dreams a hundred times a day, in which she married the lord, and

was cross with her geese because she had to tend them.

Now when the lord of the castle went riding by the green meadow, this silly goose girl would run after the carriage, shouting his name and throwing bouquets of wild flowers to him. But alas! The carriage always whirled by so quickly that the lord heard her not, and the bouquets of wild flowers fell in the dust by the roadside. Each time the goose girl wept and threw sticks at her geese because she had been disappointed, until they fled to shelter.

"It is the stupid coachman's fault," said the goose girl to herself one day, after she had chased the carriage for a long distance. "My lord is within, of course, and cannot hear me, for the windows of glass shut out all sound." She knew that maidens often wrote letters when they were unable to obtain speech with those whom they fancied, and she resolved to write to the lord of the gray stone castle.

She spent her year's earnings on some pink paper with red hearts lovingly entwined on the border, and that her letter might be colorful and splendid, she bought also some purple ink.

Then the goose girl sat before a flat rock and strove to compose such a letter to the lord that he would stop his carriage the next time he rode by the meadow.

"The first day he will ask me to ride with him, and the second day he will ask me to wed him," thought the goose girl, as she sat gazing at the gray stone castle. "The third day I shall ride with him a bride to yonder castle, where I shall dwell forevermore and have naught to do with geese but to eat them roasted!"

Her geese, thinking perhaps she had spread on the rock something fine to eat, crowded about her, but she drove them off. They bothered her, and she wished to give her mind to the letter. One large blue gander remained near, in spite of her angry motions and cross words. The goose girl was about to begin her letter when she remembered that she had brought no pen.

"Ah me! What shall I do?" she cried. "I shall have no more earnings for another year, and by that time my lord may be wed to some fair maiden, and I will surely die of a broken

heart!" She covered her face and wept aloud at her misfortune. Suddenly she began to laugh instead.

"Oh, that I should be so foolish!" she exclaimed. "Here waiting my hand I have a hundred pens." She seized the large blue gander and plucked a fine quill from under his wing, but no sooner had she done so than the bird began to speak.

"That is not right," declared the gander. "You have taken what belongs not to you but to me. Put back my quill, or I shall be vexed."

"And who is there to care?" replied the goose girl rudely. "When I have written a letter to my lord of the gray stone castle, you shall have your quill and not before."

She began to speak her thoughts aloud, as goose girls often do, and started once more to compose the letter. "To my dearest lord of the gray stone castle, whom I love with all my heart, but who whirls past me as I sit tending geese in the meadow," she planned to write, and dipped the quill in the purple ink. To her dismay the pen wrote not at all as she planned,

but seemed possessed of a spirit to go of itself. It wrote with a remarkable flourish:

"Dear gander!"

But the goose girl pulled it from the paper before it could write more.

"What manner of pen is this?" she cried in vexation.

"It is not your quill," said the blue gander. "I am its master, and it will write letters to none but me."

"Well, upon my word!" declared the goose girl. "You are the most forward creature I have yet seen, and this is what you will get." She took a long branch and beat the gander until he hid from sight in the bushes. Then again she strove to write her letter, but again the pen was possessed of a spirit of mischief.

"Oh! Oh!" wept the goose girl, "I have spent all my earnings on splendid pink paper with red hearts lovingly entwined on the border, and purple ink I bought also that my letter might be fine as a valentine. But, alas! I am bothered with a stubborn quill that will not write as I think. If I write not my letter to my lord, he will never know of me. Then he will

never marry me, and I shall dwell forever in my wretched hut instead of the gray stone castle, as I have desired."

"You weep because you cannot marry the lord who lives in yonder gray stone castle," said the blue gander, poking his long neck from the bushes where he had fled. "Let me give you some advice. A wretched hut is not a pleasant place, 't is true, but your manners suit it better than the castle of your dreams."

"Hold your tongue, forward bird!" screamed the goose girl in anger. She seized a clod of earth and hurled it with such force that had it struck the gander, he would have fallen flat in his tracks; but luck was with him, and he dodged.

The next day and the next day after that the goose girl sat down to write before the flat rock in the meadow; but the quill was stubborn as ever. She spoiled all but one sheet of the precious pink paper. Then once more the blue gander spoke to the goose girl.

"You have spoiled many sheets of your precious pink paper," said the gander, nodding his head and cocking his eye in the wisest sort

So at last, after much thought, the goose girl did as the blue gander bade.— *Page* 237.

of way. "Why will you not let the quill write a letter to me, — if only to see what will happen?"

"But then I shall have no more paper on which to write to my lord, and I shall dwell forever in my wretched hut instead of the castle of my dreams," answered the goose girl.

"Mayhap there might be a betwixt and between," remarked the gander sagely. "Write the letter and hand it to me with a bow."

So at last, after much thought, the goose girl did as the blue gander bade. She dipped the quill in the purple ink, and immediately it touched the paper it began to write such a marvelous letter as never before was seen or read! It called the blue gander all manner of tender names and vowed he was handsome and knowing. At the end, this remarkable quill wrote the goose girl's name with a flourish so fine that she was pleased in spite of herself. She folded the letter and handed it to the gander with a bow.

No sooner had she done this than the blue gander spread his wings and flew away in the clouds, and in his place stood a handsome

shepherd lad dressed in blue corduroys. He had a hundred sheep in the fold that followed him, and in his hand a bag of silver.

"Dearest Goose Girl, wilt be mine?" asked he. "Yonder is my cottage, where I am sure we shall be very happy."

The goose girl was amazed at the change. But so handsome was this young shepherd lad, and so winning of speech and manner, that all thoughts of the gray stone castle and the lord tumbled out of her head. She gazed with delight at the little cottage to which the shepherd lad pointed. Blue smoke was curling from its chimney, and a bluebird was singing in a cage beside the kitchen door.

"We shall be married at once, shepherd lad of my heart," she answered him sweetly, "and I shall make you griddlecakes for your supper."

So the goose girl and the shepherd were married and went to live in the little cottage. Indeed, for all that I know, there they may be living to this day, for I have met no one who has ever told me of the death of either.

CHAPTER X

THE LITTLE BROWN MAN

ONCE upon a time, there lived at the top of a very tall tree a little magic sprite. Now this magic sprite was called the Little Brown Man, and the tree was called the Tall Pine Tree. The Little Brown Man was so very small that had you ever seen him skipping and hopping about in his tree, you would have thought him some lively little brown squirrel. The Little Brown Man was always busy as a bee and twice as cheerful. He spent his days sweeping away the withered pine needles so that fresh new green needles might grow. With his cunning hands and powers of magic he mended broken places in the bark with healing herbs. At night the Little Brown Man rested from his labors. He curled himself up in the topmost boughs of the Tall Pine Tree, and the tree would rock him gently and sing him songs about the sea.

Thus the Little Brown Man, scarce bigger than my hand, and the Tall Pine Tree so high lived on in peace and happiness until an evil time befell them. It happened on a black winter's night, when the Storm Wind in a rage went crashing through the forest. Lashing the heavy branches of the tallest trees, he tore them loose and flung them to the ground as though they had been but so many twigs. Uprooting tiny trees and saplings by the score, the Storm Wind tore his way along until he reached the Tall Pine Tree. There he saw the Little Brown Man asleep in its topmost boughs.

"Ha, Little Brown Man!" laughed the Storm Wind wickedly. "At last I 've caught you unaware, and I will do you mischief!" So saying, he blew a furious blast and flung the Little Brown Man to the ground beneath. Then, in a wailing voice, the Storm Wind wove a spell of deep enchantment round the Little Brown Man, singing thus:

"Flaming eye and hand like claw,
You 'll dwell at your tree top no more;
No child at your approach will stay,
Your face will scare them all away.

But 'til some child bids you good-day,
You 'll dwell down on the ground so low,
And to the Tall Pine cannot go!"

And then the Storm Wind blew away.

For a long time, the Little Brown Man lay still as one dead, for the fall had hurt him cruelly. The Tall Pine Tree wept bitterly at the little sprite's misfortune, and by and by its tears, falling like rain, wakened the Little Brown Man. But alas! The Storm Wind's wicked spell had changed him, and the Little Brown Man with flaming eye and clawlike hand was very fierce and terrible to look upon.

"Oh, tell me, my Pine Tree!" cried the Little Brown Man in dismay, "how am I changed thus? My hands are hands no longer, but claws like those of wild beasts; my eye flames redder than the wicked wolf's! I cannot hop or skip; indeed, I scarce can hobble, so bent and twisted have I grown."

"Alas, my Little Brown Man!" the Tall Pine Tree replied. "While you did sleep, the Storm Wind tore you from my topmost bough, and wove this wicked spell around you. Until some

child will speak to you a kindly word, you must remain thus bound by this evil spell."

In spite of his twisted back, the Little Brown Man tried again and again to climb into the Tall Pine Tree, but all his efforts were in vain. Wearied and tired out at last, he made himself a nest among the withered pine needles and began to wait for the magic word to break the Storm Wind's evil spell.

At last the winter passed. The snow began to melt; the brook, freed of its coat of ice, began to sing and chatter as it splashed along; the birds built nests; the sun shone down; the pussy willows, gray and brown, began to bud and bloom. Then boys and girls came out to play beneath the trees and gather buttercups and bluebells. The Little Brown Man's heart rejoiced, for he was sure the evil spell that bound him soon would end. Whenever happy children played beside the Tall Pine Tree, he would hobble toward them, saying:

"Good day to you! Good day to you, my children!"

But alas! The boys and girls were frightened of his clawlike hands and flaming eye, and so

they screamed and ran away. Thus springtime went, and summer followed after; the maple leaves flamed red and gold in autumn, and winter came again to wrap the forest in its cloak of snowy white. Still the magic words to break the Storm Wind's spell remained unspoken. Thus years and years rolled on. In winter now the Storm Wind tore the branches of the Tall Pine Tree and flung them to the ground. The Little Brown Man, with his cunning hands and powers of magic, could no longer bind them fast. The Tall Pine Tree, once so green, grew old and rusty looking, because the Little Brown Man could no longer sweep the withered needles from its boughs. The Little Brown Man, down upon the ground, was in despair. It seemed the wicked spell would never be broken. No children ever lingered near the Tall Pine Tree. Indeed, when once they passed that way, they never came again. They thought the Little Brown Man was a wicked pixie who would do them harm.

Then at last the Little Brown Man peered from his nest one bright morning and saw a little

girl walking slowly toward the Tall Pine Tree. Little Nannie always walked very slowly, because she was quite lame, and leaned upon a crutch. Sometimes she paused to watch a bee or butterfly; sometimes she leaned against a tree to rest, and all the while the Little Brown Man watched her eagerly. At last she reached the Tall Pine Tree, and then he hobbled forward, saying:

"Good day to you! Good day to you, my child!"

His flaming eye and clawlike hand so startled Little Nannie that she dropped her crutch; but when she saw that the Little Brown Man was also very lame, she was sorry for him, and so she answered bravely:

"Good day to you, good sir! I hope your health is fine," and so the magic words were spoken.

The Little Brown Man could scarcely believe his ears and began to caper about and prance with glee. Then presto! In a twinkling vanished all his ugly features, his back grew straight, and he was once more kindly-eyed.

"Oh, Tall Pine Tree! Oh, Tall Pine Tree!"

he cried in joy. "Behold now I am free to climb up to your topmost boughs once more!" But in his joy the Little Brown Man did not forget Little Nannie, who stood staring, wide-eyed, at the wonders she had seen.

"And now, my child!" cried he, "what can I do to serve you?"

"Oh, please, sir," answered Little Nannie timidly, "if you would give me my crutch, I would be most grateful. I am so lame that I cannot stoop to pick it up myself."

"Your crutch!" screamed the Little Brown Man in a passion of rage. "It is a wicked stick that holds you back when you would run and play, and so I treat it thus!" He seized the crutch and flung it in the brook, and there it floated swiftly in the current.

"Oh, Little Brown Man, what have you done!" wept Little Nannie. "Now I can never wander in the forest any more, but must sit always in my chair. I cannot walk without my crutch, and my mother is too poor to buy me another." She leaned against the Tall Pine Tree and sobbed aloud.

"Stop, stop, Little Nannie!" cried the Little

Brown Man, "I meant you no harm, as you will see. Now tell me this: Is it your wish to walk always with a crutch? If so, say but a word, and I will bring it back again, for now my powers of magic are returned."

"Oh, Little Brown Man!" answered Little Nannie through her tears, "I do not wish to walk always with a crutch; indeed, I often weep because I wish to run and play like other boys and girls."

"Then try and see if your wish come true, Little Nannie," commanded the Little Brown Man.

Little Nannie took a step forward, and then another and another, and found her feet like wings. So, singing and laughing, she danced home through the forest, the happiest child in all the world. When she reached her gate, she cried out:

"Oh, Mother! Mother! Come quickly and see! I can run and play like other boys and girls! The Little Brown Man has granted my wish to me!"

"My child!" cried her mother in amazement, "this is the work of a good fairy without doubt!

And what did you say to thank the Little Brown Man?"

"Oh, mother, I was so happy I forgot," replied Little Nannie, hanging her head.

"Then let us go in search of him at once," said her mother.

So hand in hand they sought the Little Brown Man, but though they called loud and long at the foot of the Tall Pine Tree, they could not find the Little Brown Man. For at the magic of a kindly word, he had flown to the topmost boughs, and there he dwelled for evermore.

CHAPTER XI

A TALE FOR HALLOWEEN

BABETTE and Antone were the children of a very poor woodcutter. They lived in a little cottage on the side of a steep mountain, and the mountain looked upon a great forest. Now though their father toiled in this forest from dawn until dark, he could earn but little. Wood in that region was plentiful, and woodcutters were numerous. Their mother made fine laces which Antone carried to the market to sell; but in spite of all their efforts, the poor parents seldom could give their children more than bread and broth to eat. Often indeed the broth was lacking if the woodcutter found no hare in the traps he set. Babette and Antone, however, were happy little children and never thought of their poverty. But it worried the woodcutter that Antone was ten years old and had

not yet gone to school. Antone's mother taught him to read and write, that the other boys and girls would not be too far beyond him, and Antone studied his lessons diligently. Often as he sat doing his sums on the hearthstone, with a bit of charcoal for a pencil, his mother would sigh sadly. Antone did not like his mother to be sad, and so he always laughed to cheer her.

"Never fear, Mother," he would say. "Soon I shall send myself to school. My vegetable patch does finely. Then, when I am a great scholar, you shall be poor no longer. My father shall have a team of oxen and you a fine satin gown; Babette shall have a dozen real dollies instead of the turnip dollies she now rocks in her dolly cradle."

"Ah, Antone, my son," his mother would answer with a sigh, "unless you make your fortune as a maker of toys, I fear you will have no fortune at all. Your fingers are as clever as a wizard's even now; and though you are past ten, we cannot spare you to go to school."

It was true, as she said. Antone made boats from bits of cedar wood, and when he had fitted

them with sails you could not tell them from any that had come out of a shop. He carved a doll's cradle from a pine knot, and for a dolly painted the white face of a turnip until one would think it was the face of some fair maiden, — so blue were this turnip dolly's eyes and so pink her cheeks, her hair of golden corn silk fell in such waves and her robe of young cabbage leaves was so green and beautiful. Then as often as this turnip dolly faded and began to shrivel, Antone made another, which Babette declared was always more beautiful than the one before. Babette had never been to the village and therefore knew nothing of real dollies. She loved her turnip babies tenderly indeed; she always carried them in her arm when she went with Antone to meet their father and sang them little songs as she rocked them to sleep.

Now it happened one night in the season of Halloween that Antone sat carving jack-o'-lanterns to sell in the village. Babette, who was rocking her dolly to sleep, sat watching him. Being but six, she knew nothing about the fun which comes with Halloween, and so she

listened round-eyed with wonder to Antone, who knew all things about jack-o'-lanterns. When she heard that boys and girls dressed like goblins and witches frolicked in the village streets, Babette made up her mind to frolic too.

"How fine it must be!" she cried, clapping her hands. "Halloween must be quite like Christmas!"

"Not quite so fine as Christmas, Babette," answered Antone, as he carved the teeth in the last jack-o'-lantern, "but Halloween is very fine nevertheless. It is comical to see the jack-o'-lanterns bobbing up and down with their faces grinning in the candle light. And on Halloween the boys and girls play pranks on their elders that they would be well switched for at any other time; but every one laughs and is gay on that night." Antone finished the jack-o'-lantern and piled it with a dozen more in his little cart. He would sell them all in the village when he took his vegetables to market the next day; no one else could carve such splendid pumpkin faces as Antone.

"Then let us go and play pranks in the village too, Antone," cried Babette. "Mother will

make us goblin dresses, and there is still one great pumpkin in your garden for a jack-o'-lantern. Oh, what a frolic we shall have!"

"Babette!" exclaimed Antone in astonishment. "Wherever did you get such a notion? The frolic in the village is not for us. Mother has no time to make us goblin dresses, and if she did, she has no goods; besides, how should we find our way home through the forest?"

"You know the way through the forest, Antone," insisted Babette, "and if Mother cannot make us goblin dresses, we can go without. It will be dark and our jack-o'-lantern will be as fine as any. Do come," she begged, "I have never been to a Halloween frolic."

"Now, Babette, I tell you we cannot go to the village to-morrow night," answered Antone. "I could not find my way home through the forest after dark, and we would both be lost. Be a good girl and do not tease any more."

Antone spoke sternly, and Babette burst into tears. She was very fond of her own way, and when she could not have it, sometimes she was a very naughty little girl. She sobbed and wept so piteously that Antone found it hard to

refuse her. However, he dared not go to the village at night, as he feared to lose his way in the forest. So Antone trotted Babette on his knee and whispered that he would buy her chocolate; but she only wept the harder.

"Now, Babette!" cried Antone at last, when Babette showed no signs of stopping, "I cannot take you to the village; but if you are a good girl and stop crying at once, I will make a little Halloween frolic just for you and me. Now promise me you will not cry any more."

Babette dried her eyes and promised. She wished a Halloween frolic, but whether she frolicked at home or in the village mattered not at all.

"Will we wear goblin dresses or ghost dresses, Antone?" she asked.

Antone puzzled a moment before he answered. "Oh, ghost dresses, I think," said he.

The next day Babette was very good. She helped Antone gather his vegetables for market, and when he returned sat beside him quietly while he carved the last pumpkin from his garden. When the jack-o'-lantern was finished, Antone lighted the candle just for one second

so that she might see it grinning in the light. Babette clapped her hands; but he held up a warning finger. The Halloween frolic was to be a secret. After supper the children went to bed as usual, but instead of undressing, they pulled their white nightdresses over their heavy coats.

"They will do for ghost dresses," whispered Antone when all was still, and they crept softly out. In the moonlight the jack-o'-lantern was grinning broadly to greet them.

"Pumpkin is smiling at us," laughed Babette. She was very happy, for her frolic was about to begin.

Antone struck a match to light the candle, but there was no candle in the jack-o'-lantern.

"I put the candle in; I know I did," said he in surprise. He searched in the dark, and Babette stopped her laughing. Antone looked about, and there beneath the bench lay the remainder of his precious candle. It was chewed to bits, and the wick was in shreds.

"Oh, Babette!" cried he. "A wicked rat has stolen our candle, and I paid a whole penny for it too!"

"Oh, the bad rats!" cried Babette, bursting into tears. She stamped her foot and sent the jack-o'-lantern rolling off the bench. It struck the earth with a bump and dented its nose a trifle.

"Now, Babette, what a baby you are! See what you have done!" cried Antone. He stooped to pick up the pumpkin, but the pumpkin was too quick for him.

"Oh, no, you don't," laughed Pumpkin in a thick throaty sort of voice. "Babette smashed my nose a little, but that 's no matter on a Halloween night. Good-by, boys and girls," he called airily and rolled swiftly down the hill.

"You come back here; you 're my pumpkin," cried Antone and started after the runaway. Babette followed, weeping and crying aloud.

"Oh, my Halloween frolic! Oh, my Halloween frolic!" she mourned. "Now we have no jack-o'-lantern and no candle either."

"But just you wait until he rolls down into the vegetable garden," shouted Antone, as he chased the swiftly rolling pumpkin. "He 'll have to stop at the hedge." He took his little sister's hand that she might run faster. Pump-

kin rolled along just in front of them but always just out of their reach. When he reached the hedge, he gave a great leap and landed directly in the vegetable patch.

"Come on, you Turnips! Come on, you Carrots!" called Pumpkin, as he rolled along. At his words the Carrots and Turnips tore themselves from their beds and followed after him, shouting.

"Come on! Come on!" called Pumpkin, and Parsnips and Beets followed the Carrots and Turnips.

"Look at Antone following us," yelled Pumpkin, and all his vegetable followers turned and laughed in derision.

"Ordinary nights you may be master, Antone," cried they, "but not on Halloween. This is our night."

"Well, you wait until I catch you and then see how hard you 'll laugh," called Antone angrily. To see his vegetable patch laid waste made him furious.

"But you 'll wait until you catch us before you punish us, won't you, Antone?" they answered mockingly.

"Oh, it 's Halloween! It 's Halloween!" sang Pumpkin, turning handsprings as he rolled along, and the rest of the vegetables did cartwheels as they went careering after him. They looked like a dozen market stalls upset on the hillside, and poor Antone nearly wept when he thought of his loss. He followed them with determination. Antone was not a lad to give up easily.

"Follow me! Follow me!" sang Pumpkin, as he led the way to a tiny door that opened beneath the forest. Turnips and Carrots squeezed through, and Antone, fearing to be left behind, caught up Babette and ran faster. Just as he reached the little door, a rough Potato tried to slam it in his face. But Antone was too quick for him. He ran through and climbed down the hole into the underground forest. There he continued the chase, but the ground here was springy and elastic, and with each step Antone began to gain on the vegetables. Babette's fatigue left her, and she shook herself free of Antone's hand.

"We 'll catch up to them," declared Antone as they ran along. Even as he spoke, Potato

stubbed his toe, and Babette caught him. She held him firmly, although he squirmed and tried his best to get free.

"Help! Help!" bawled Potato, when he saw he was a prisoner. "Oh, Pumpkin, wait for me!" he cried. The tears streamed from every one of his eyes, and he looked truly sad. At his cries Pumpkin turned around, and all the vegetables followed their leader.

"Come now, Antone," began Pumpkin in a persuasive voice. "You might let us have one night off, you know. Halloween is our night." Somewhere on his run, Pumpkin had picked up two twigs, and on these he now balanced himself rather unsteadily and thrust his leaves in the place where his pockets would have been if he had had pockets. He looked so very jolly and his grin was so very broad that Antone was inclined to give up the prisoner; but just then he thought of the ruined vegetable garden and grew angry again.

"It is all very well for you to be polite, Pumpkin, and try to beg off your friend," said Antone, "but this is the very fellow that tried to slam the door in my face not two seconds ago."

"Oh, Antone," cried Potato, "that 's wrong. It was three seconds ago as true as I live. I looked at my watch just as I was trying to pinch your nose in the underground door, and it 's quite three seconds ago; maybe it 's four."

"Oh, hush up!" cried Pumpkin. "That 's no way to talk when you are trying to beg off. Let him off for my sake, Antone," he continued in a most winning voice. "You 'd get everlastingly tired of being in bed yourself; you know you would. See if you wouldn't take the first chance to kick up your heels if you could get it."

"But, Pumpkin," replied Antone, "think of my vegetable garden; it is ruined. I was saving all my vegetable money to go to school, and now I cannot go for ever and ever so long. Besides, how could I know you got tired of being in a bed? You never spoke to me before."

"Well, I speak to you now," replied Pumpkin, "and as for your vegetable patch, we 'll all make that up to you, won't we, boys?"

"We will! We will!" called the vegetables in chorus, and the Potato in Babette's little fist yelled the loudest of all.

"There, now, you see we mean no harm," declared Pumpkin, "so let Potato go. Then you can both join us in our Halloween frolic."

At the magic words "Halloween frolic," Babette put Potato down at once. She was bound to have her fun, and, after all, the vegetables seemed to be a jolly lot. So peace was made, and the children followed the bobbing Turnips and Onions. Then shouts were heard, and Pumpkin ordered a halt. Presently they were joined by a dozen or more Cabbages.

"You 're nice ones!" panted the Cabbages. "There we sat in the storeroom waiting for you to call us, and the first thing we knew we saw you pelting off down the hill like mad things."

"My gracious!" said a very stout Cabbage, who was terribly out of breath, "I 'll have to take off my outer leaves before I go another step. I feel as though I were boiled."

Antone recognized the Cabbages at once. "You are Father Minette's cabbages, are you not?" he inquired politely as they marched along.

"Why, if it is n't little Antone, the woodcutter's son!" exclaimed the very stout Cabbage.

"Yes, we come from Minette's farm. Mother Minette saved us for pickle, but we fooled her and slipped out of the storeroom when she was not looking. Oh, we Cabbages are not so green as we look!" The Cabbages all laughed, and Antone was surprised to find that he laughed too.

As they went marching on, Pumpkin sang and danced in the lead, and Onions and Carrots echoed his hearty songs. Presently great black cats with shining yellow eyes stepped from behind the trees, and each cat was soon joined by its mistress, who was no other than a real witch in tall peaked hat and carrying a broomstick. The Cabbages, who were a friendly lot, introduced Antone and Babette to these witches, and the witches seemed pleased to meet the children.

"They do not seem to be wicked witches, do they, Antone?" whispered Babette.

"Oh, my dear," replied a witch who overheard, "we are not a bit wicked on Halloween, you know. Any other night, I would probably do you a mischief. It is my nature, you know." She reached in her bag and handed Babette a

peppermint. Babette, who was very fond of peppermint, ate it up with all haste.

"You should n't do that, my dear," reproved the witch. "It is seldom witches give peppermints, and when they do the peppermints should be treasured. Here is another to keep for your pocket, and then you will never be without a peppermint when you want one." And she handed Babette another. Babette curtseyed so prettily that the witch was charmed and took her to ride on her broomstick.

It was the gayest company one ever could imagine, as they marched along. Every vegetable was singing a different Halloween song in a different key, and they all had voices that sang out of tune by nature. Babette, her little white nightdress flying in the breeze, was riding on the witch's broomstick and singing loudly as the rest. When they reached the dancing-floor it was lighted with millions and millions of glowworms, and an orchestra of ten thousand frogs hummed lively tunes in their throats. Pumpkin seized a handful of glowworms and put them in his head. Then with his features all aglow he cried out:

It was the gayest company one ever could imagine, as they marched along.— *Page* 262.

"Ready for the dance!"

Instead of taking partners, the vegetables just plunged on to the floor and began to jump about like mad. If they fell down they did not jump up at once but rolled around the floor most good-naturedly. They looked so like vegetables boiling about in a great soup kettle that Antone thought he should die of laughing. The witches took their brooms and began a sort of "ladies-change" figure while they chased their cats around the edge of the circle. Babette danced hardest of all. She knew no more of dancing than any Carrot or Parsnip, but she capered wildly, singing at the top of her voice.

"Come and dance too, Antone," called Babette, as she went jumping past her brother, but he shook his head and laughed.

"I am too big for such nonsense," said he. "I am ten, you know."

"What nonsense!" cried a witch who was chasing her cat close by. "Ten is exactly the right age to have fun." She raised her broom playfully, and before he knew it, she swept Antone into the middle of the dance. Pumpkin, his grinning features all aglow, went flying past

and made Antone feel proud. Pumpkin was certainly the handsomest vegetable of the lot. As the night grew later, the frogs hummed faster, but hum as fast as they would, they could not keep up with the frisky vegetables. Beets and Cauliflowers continued to bob up and down like mad; Cabbages from Minette's farm lost leaf after leaf; Carrots and Onions grew battered from much tumbling about, and the merry din of song and laughter grew louder and louder.

"Let 's play Blind Man's Buff," called Antone. "I 'll be 'it' and show you how to play." He tied the handkerchief over his eyes, and the witches and their black cats went darting hither and thither. The vegetables were so pleased with this new game that they would play nothing else. They might have been playing it yet had not a cock crowed suddenly.

"Good gracious me!" cried a witch. "The glowworms are all gone out. It 's nearly morning. All who are going back to the vegetable patch had best be on their way."

"Not I!" cried Pumpkin. "I 've done with vegetable patches forevermore."

"Not we," exclaimed the Cabbages. "We 're

going to turn savage and be wild cabbages for the rest of our days! We shan't go back to Mother Minette's pickle jars." Straightway every vegetable began to raise its voice and declare it would not go back to Antone's patch.

"Oh, hush, all of you!" cried the witch. "Stay in the woods for the rest of your life if you like. It is nothing to me; but what of Antone and Babette? Who is to take them home?"

"Well, ma'am," replied Pumpkin with a low bow, "we thought that you might be good enough to give them a ride home on your broomstick."

"But Pumpkin!" cried Antone in dismay, "you promised to make it up to me if I let Potato go, and I think you should all return with me. I shall not have any vegetables if you all remain in the woods."

"Never worry about that, Antone," replied Pumpkin with a lordly air. "Here is a purse for each of you, and if you take good care never to lose them, you will have plenty of gold forever. Is n't that true, boys?"

"True as we 're not going back to the farm," cried the Cabbages. "You had best hurry and

plant yourself before it grows daylight, Pumpkin," they warned and began to dig holes in the earth. Before Antone and Babette had mounted the witch's broomstick, all the Carrots and Turnips and even Pumpkin were all tucked up in their sandy beds. They called a faint good-by as the children sailed off with the witch.

"Oh, what a beautiful Halloween frolic," sighed Babette as she leaned her head on Antone's shoulder and fell fast asleep.

The broomstick flew with the swiftness of an eagle, and the witch warned Antone to hold Babette with a firm grasp. One by one the stars went out as they sped across the sky. The black cat steered and seemed to know the exact way to the woodcutter's cottage, for just as the dawn was breaking the broomstick glided down to Babette's window. The witch shook hands with Antone, and the black cat politely jumped off to help Antone with his little sister. Before the good creature could mount again, the broomstick was off like whirlwind, and it was left behind.

"This broomstick is so wild I cannot stop it,"

called the witch from the clouds. "Keep good care of my cat until next Halloween."

Antone put Babette in her little crib and made the black cat a comfortable bed in the kitchen. Then he lay down to sleep and dreamed of the Halloween frolic until he was wakened by his mother.

"Come, Antone!" she cried. "I have good news for you. Only look from the window and see the great black cat without a single white hair that sits washing his face in the sun. Such a cat coming to us on Halloween will surely bring us good luck! But come, my child, get up, for the sun is high, and it is time for you to dig your vegetables for market."

"My vegetables have gone wild in the forest," muttered Antone, "but it is no matter, for here is a bag of gold which they gave me. The cat is the black cat of the witch who brought us home on her broomstick; so let me sleep, Mother, for I am weary with dancing at the Halloween frolic." He closed his eyes and slept again, while his mother examined the leather bag.

"Antone, my son!" she screamed. "Here is gold yellow as a pumpkin! Where have you

been to gather such wealth?" She shook him and gave him no peace until he waked fully and told the story. Even then his mother did not believe it, but threw up her hands and wept that her son should thus rave with fever.

The woodcutter and Babette came running to see what had happened, and at the sight of the second bag of gold the poor woman grew calmer. Babette showed the peppermint which the witch had given her, and the mother doubted no more.

"To receive a peppermint from a witch is surely a mark of great favor," said she, and began to laugh through her tears. "I thought I was dreaming or that Antone raved of fever, for never in my life had I seen so much gold."

"It is like the fairies to bless the children of the poor," said the woodcutter. "Now Antone will go to school, and Mother will have a handsome dress and shawl."

"And is it not as I said?" cried his wife. "A black cat coming on Halloween would bring us good luck, and here is the luck already!"

It would have been hard to find a happier family than the woodcutter's as they set out

for the village that day. When it was told that the woodcutter was looking for a pair of oxen, some folk laughed outright. The woodcutter was too poor to feed a pair of canaries, they declared; but when it became known that the woodcutter's wife had bought a new dress and a golden ring, they began to wonder who had died and left the woodcutter a fortune. Antone told the tale of their wealth to those who questioned him, and straightway the village children ran to throw their jack-o'-lanterns from the roofs and high places. But their pumpkins broke or stayed on the ground below where they had fallen (it was no longer Halloween, remember). At noon, when the woodcutter and his family sat down to dinner in the village inn, the landlord threatened to charge a penny from all who stood gazing through the windows. Some folk scoffed openly and declared it was a tale to tell children and dullards; but there were the two leather bags filled with gold. The greatest marvel of all was, that no matter how much the woodcutter or his wife spent from these, the bags always remained brimful of gold!

Antone chose a pair of steel skates in the village shop and bought an armful of books for which he had longed. Babette, however, with her usual perverse ways, would have none of the dollies in the village toy shop. They were ugly, she declared, and their cheeks were not pink and beautiful as were the turnip dollies Antone made for her.

And ever after that the woodcutter and his wife were no longer poor folk. They had white bread and even butter every day of their lives, and on Sundays and holidays they had roasted fowl for their dinner. Antone went to school, and Babette had an embroidered frock which was the envy of every child in the village. Their mother no longer sighed as she went about her household tasks, and neither did she strain her eyes making fine laces for market. Instead she rode proudly on the seat of her husband's ox cart when he delivered wood in the village; sometimes she even drank tea with the mayor's wife! Visitors from far and near went to see the famous spot where Antone's vegetables all ran away one Halloween night; and to this day there lives not a man who can make grow on

that land cabbages or turnips or any other vegetable, although in a spot in the forest, not far off, cabbages and pumpkins and all such vegetables grow wild.

Each year, as regularly as Halloween came to mark the harvest time, Antone and Babette mounted the broomstick with the witch and rode off to the Halloween frolic. There they always found Pumpkin grown rounder and jollier than the year before, and they always rode home across the sky just as the dawn was breaking. The black cat became so fond of Babette that it never again rejoined its rightful mistress, but remained with the woodcutter and his family and brought them good luck for the rest of their days.

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